NATION

Census to be done in two phases in 2026, 2027

≫ Page: 4 ≪

BUSINESS

Rupee closes at all-time low of 89.96

≫ Page: 7 ≪

SPORTS

India bets on Ro-ko for ODI against SA

≫ Page: 8 ≪

www.twitter.com/EnglishSalar
www.facebook.com/EnglishSalar
www.instagram.com/dailysalarenglish
youtube.com/@dailysalardigital

SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in | www.magzter.com | 3 DECEMBER 2025 | WEDNESDAY | BENGALURU | 11 JAMADIUL AKHIR, 1447 H | Vol 4 | Issue No 329 | Pages: 8

Intruders need no red carpet: SC on Rohingyas

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

The Supreme Court on Tuesday sharply questioned the legal status of Rohingyas living in India and asked whether "intruders" should be given a "red carpet welcome" while the country's own citizens grapple with poverty. A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi made sharp observations while hearing a habeas corpus (bring the person) petition filed by rights activist Rita Manchanda alleging disappearance of few Rohingyas from the custody of authorities here. Now, the hearing in the case has been adjourned to 16 December. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 5

Pak blames India for hindering aid to flood-hit Lanka

ISLAMABAD, 2 DEC

Pakistan on Tuesday alleged that its relief mission to cyclone-hit Sri Lanka was being obstructed by India "delaying permission" for overflight, a charge New Delhi firmly denied. Indian officials said Pakistan's request to use Indian airspace was submitted around 1pm on Monday and cleared by 5.30pm, processed at "the shortest notice of four hours". They termed as "fake and misleading" Pakistani media reports claiming India blocked the flight. The Pakistan Foreign Office, however, said its aircraft had faced delays of 60 hours and claimed India's clearance issued after 48 hours did not permit a return leg. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 6

Russia eyes energy, defence deals with India

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

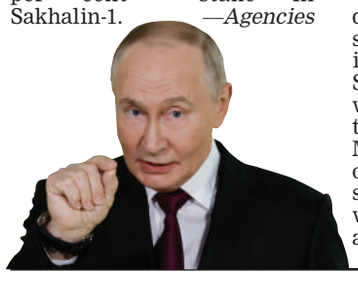
Russian President Vladimir Putin will begin a two-day visit to India on Thursday, seeking to revive de-fence and energy ties strained by tightening Western sanctions and New Delhi's shifting oil purchases. Putin, visiting for the first time in four years, will be accompanied by Defence Minister Andrei Belousov and top executives from Sberbank, Rosoboronexport, Rosneft and GazpromNeft.

Russia has long been India's primary arms supplier, and India became the largest buyer of seaborne Rus-sian crude after the Ukraine invasion. However, India's Russian oil imports are set to fall to a three-year low this month amid sanctions pressure and rising purchases of US crude.

Indian officials remain wary of provoking US President Donald Trump, who doubled tariffs on Indian goods in August over Russian oil imports.

Russia has stated that it is aware of US pressure on India to stop buying Russian oil. But it will not inter-fere with India-US relations. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Tuesday.

Defence ties remain central. India operates a large fleet of Russian platforms and is expected to discuss the Su-57 fighter and additional S-400 air-defence units. Moscow is likely to seek India's help in securing technical equipment for its sanctioned oil assets, while New Delhi will push for restoring ONGC Videsh's 20 per cent stake in Sakhalin-1. *—Agencies*



Cyber app not must: Govt after backlash

Says users can delete it amid snooping fear

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Communications Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Tuesday sought to reassure users amid a mounting privacy row over the government's directive requiring all smartphone manufacturers to pre-install the Sanchar Saathi app. Scindia said users would be "free to delete" the cybersecurity app if they wished and stressed that it would remain inactive unless a user registers on it.

The 28 November order directed smartphone makers to preload the app on all new devices and push it through updates to existing phones. Opposition leaders and digital rights advocates criticised the move as a potential surveillance tool, alleging the app could monitor calls and messages. Some manufacturers, including Apple, were reportedly opposed to the mandate and are expected to discuss a "middle path" with the government.

Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

Scindia denied all allegations of snooping. However, the directive's wording, that manufacturers must ensure the app's functionalities are not "disabled or restricted", raised questions about whether it would be embedded in the operating system. Tech experts noted that apps embedded at OS level cannot be deleted, while others may continue running in the background even if removed from the home screen.

Experts also pointed out that Sanchar Saathi seeks access to call logs, SMS, the camera, notifications and the dialler, permissions similar to many other apps. The government has maintained that the mandate is crucial to curb cyber fraud linked to duplicate or spoofed IMEI numbers. All handset makers must report compliance to the Department of Telecommunications within 120 days.

Industry expert Akhilesh Shukla said clarity was still needed in writing to confirm the app can indeed be deleted. CUTS International's Amol Kulkarni criticised the lack of public consultation, warning that mandatory pre-installation risked undermining user choice and could breach data minimisation norms under the Digital Personal Data Protection Act. *—PTI*

DKS will be CM when top brass wishes: CM after breakfast 2.0

BENGALURU, 2 DEC

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah asserted that there are no differences between him and his "brother" Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar after eating breakfast at the latter's house on Tuesday.

Reiterating that both of them will abide by the decision of their party superiors, Siddaramaiah said Shivakumar will become the CM when the High Command decides.

Siddaramaiah visited Shivakumar's residence for breakfast, days after the Bengaluru Minister broke bread at Siddaramaiah's official residence.

Following Tuesday's breakfast, both leaders asserted that they and the entire party were united.

"This understanding will always be there. There are no differences. Shivakumar and I are united; we run the government unitedly. In the future also we will run the government unitedly," Siddaramaiah said after the meeting.

"If they call us, we will definitely go (to New Delhi) and meet them," Siddaramaiah said. "Tomorrow, I will be meeting AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal at a function, where both of us are invited."

DyCM DK Shivakumar and CM Siddaramaiah during a breakfast meeting at former's home in Bengaluru on Tuesday *PHOTO: SALAR*

> **There are no differences. D K Shivakumar and I are united; we run the government unitedly. In the future also we will run the government unitedly**
> - Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

Asked when Shivakumar will become the CM, Siddaramaiah said, "When the High Command says." Siddaramaiah noted that there was no communication from the High Command on the timeline for a decision on the leadership change issue.

On Shivakumar calling them "brothers", Siddaramaiah said, "We are always brothers, we are in one party and believe in the same ideology. We will work together. In 2028 (Assembly polls) too we will work together and bring Congress to power." *—PTI*

SC stays trial against BSY in POCSO case

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed the trial proceedings against former Karnataka chief minister BS Yediyurappa in a sexual-harassment case registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi passed the interim order while hearing his challenge to the Karnataka High Court's refusal to quash the case. "Issue notice. Meanwhile, trial proceedings shall remain stayed," CJI Kant said, noting that the top court would consider sending the matter back to the high court.

Senior advocate Sidharth Luthra, appearing for Yediyurappa, argued that the high court ignored material suggesting the alleged incident "did not occur" and overlooked statements the prosecution had "suppressed".

The FIR stems from a 14 March, 2024 complaint by a now-deceased woman who accused Yediyurappa of molesting her 17-year-old daughter during a visit to his residence. She also alleged that he tried to silence the matter by offering money.

Police booked him under multiple POCSO provisions. A trial court later took cognisance against him and three others for alleged destruction of evidence. The high court termed this order "cryptic" and asked the trial court to reconsider, leading to a fresh summons on 28 February.

Yediyurappa's plea to quash the case was rejected last month, prompting him to approach the Supreme Court. *—PTI*

LS to debate poll reforms, 'Vande Mataram'

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

The Lok Sabha will hold a debate on the 150th anniversary of the national song 'Vande Mataram' on Monday, followed by a discussion on electoral reforms on Tuesday, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said after an all-party meeting and a Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting chaired by Speaker Om Birla. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will open the 'Vande Mataram' debate, with 10 hours allotted for each discussion.

The decision comes amid a prolonged deadlock over the Opposition's demand for an immediate debate on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls under way in nine states and three Union Territories. Repeated disruptions forced adjournments in both Houses, with the Lok Sabha unable to take up the Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

HANDS OFF INDIA'S VOTES END SIR
ELECTIONS: NOT EXCLUSIONS
SIR = चोरी
BACKWARD, DALIT & MINORITY VOTES ARE NOT DISPOSABLE
STOP TARGETING THE POOR. END SIR
SIR IS FRAUD
SAY NO TO SIR SAVE OUR DEMOCRACY
PARLIAMENT
DAY 2
MONSOON SESSION

Oppostion leaders protest at Parliament's Makar Dwar against SIR on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Rijiju refused to give a timeline for a debate specifically on SIR, insisting it was an administrative matter for the Election Commission, though he expressed readiness to discuss broader electoral reforms. Presiding officer Dilip Saikia urged the Opposition to allow proceedings, noting the SIR exercise had already concluded in Bihar.

Earlier in the day, Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, along with MPs from DMK, CPI(M), TMC, AAP and SP, held a protest at Parliament's Makar Dwar. Accusing the government and the Election Commission of "vote theft", they demanded an immediate debate. Rahul Gandhi said the SIR was being used to disenfranchise the poor and marginalised, while Priyanka Gandhi alleged it was part of a "conspiracy to destroy democracy".

In the Rajya Sabha, Opposition parties pressed for a discussion under Rule 267, insisting it take precedence over all other business. Chairman CP Radhakrishnan, however, upheld the BAC-approved agenda, stating, "Vande Mataram is for everyone." *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

India has 1 doctor for 811 people

The doctor-population ratio in the country is 1:811, the government informed Parliament on Tuesday. In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Union Health Minister JP Nadda said there are 13,88,185 registered allopathic doctors in the country and 7,51,768 registered practitioners in the AYUSH system of medicine.

Navy to commission its 3rd indigenous nuke soon

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

India is bolstering the naval arm of its nuclear triad, with Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi announcing on Tuesday that the third indigenous nuclear-powered submarine, INS Aridaman, is in the final stages of trials and will be commissioned soon. At his annual pre–Navy Day press conference, he said the force is focused on strengthening overall combat capability, including through the upcoming Rafale-M fighters, the first four of which will arrive in 2028, and progress on the Project 75-India submarine acquisition, which is nearing closure. The Navy chief, without elaborating, said Operation Sindoor "remains in progress". "The aggressive posturing and immediate action during Operation Sindoor, including deployment of the carrier battle group forced Pakistan Navy to remain close to their ports or near the Makran coast," he said. *—PTI*

India to procure Heron drones from Israel

TEL AVIV, 2 DEC

Following the successful deployment of Heron MK II drones during Operation Sindoor, India has agreed to procure more satellite-linked UAVs under emergency provisions, significantly bolstering its defence capabilities. The drones, already used by the Army and Air Force, will also be integrated into the Navy. All three branches of the Armed Forces have opted for the Heron MK II for emergency procurement.Israel aims for 60 per cent indigenous manufacturing in collaboration with HAL. *—PTI*

50-YEAR-OLD TESTS +VE

Karnataka records year's 1st KFD case in Shivamogga

SHIVAMOGGA, 2 DEC

As the monsoon recedes, Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), known as 'monkey fever', has re-emerged in the State's Malnad. The season's first confirmed case was detected in Bullodi village under Sonale gram panchayat in Shivamogga district.

A 50-year-old Bullodi woman developed a high fever and severe headache last week. She initially sought treatment at Sonale primary health centre, was referred to a private facility and is now admitted at Manipal Hospital, Taluk health officer Dr Suresh said. Officials suspect she contracted KFD while collecting dry leaves near a forest where infected ticks are prevalent.

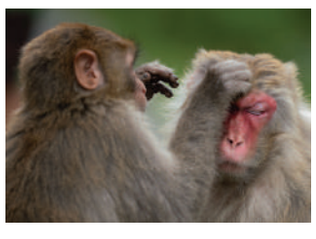


PHOTO: FREEPIK

The detection has heightened public concern in a district that has experienced outbreaks before. KFD typically resurfaces between October and the post-monsoon months, affecting forest-fringe areas of Shivamogga, Chikka-magaluru, Uttara Kannada and Kodagu.

Last year KFD severely affected Shivamogga and Uttara Kannada, infecting hundreds and killing several. Health Minister Dinesh Gundurao had said vaccine stocks were exhausted and state laboratories were expected to produce doses before the next monsoon.

KFD is a tick-borne viral haemorrhagic fever first identified in 1957 in Karnataka's Kyasanur forest. Dr Suresh warned that symptoms include sudden high fever, headache, muscle pain, vomiting, bleeding and neurological complications in severe cases.

The Karnataka Health Department conducts vaccination drives in high-risk areas. Authorities urged people near forests to wear full clothing, avoid handling dead monkeys and seek medical care. *—PTI*

NEW COMPLEX HOUSING PMO TO BE NAMED 'SEVA TEERTH'

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

The new complex housing the Prime Minister's Office will be called Seva Teerth, officials said on Tuesday, describing it as a space designed to embody the government's emphasis on service and responsibility.

The complex, earlier known as the Executive Enclave under the Central Vista Redevelopment project, is in its final stages of completion.

Along with the PMO, Seva Teerth will accommodate the Cabinet Secretariat, the National Security Council Secretariat and India House, a dedicated venue for high-level talks with visiting dignitaries. Officials said the renaming reflects a broader shift in governance, from "satta" (power) to "seva" (service) and from authority to accountability. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Khandre unveils projects worth Rs 15.5 cr in Bidar

BIDAR, 2 DEC

Forest Minister and Bidar district in-charge Eshwar Khandre, laid foundation stones for three projects totalling Rs 15.50 crore to develop Hulsur taluk in the district. They comprise an Rs 8 crore Praja Soudha administrative building to consolidate government offices and improve services; a Rs 6.45 crore upgrade expanding the 30-bed community health centre to 50 beds, enhancing emergency, women and child care, laboratory and allied services; and a Rs 1 crore overhead water tank under the KKRDB (Macro) scheme to boost storage and ensure continuous drinking water supply. Khandre said, "Improving Hulsur's infrastructure is a priority." Basavakalyana MLA Sharanu Salagar, DC Shilpa Sharma and others attended. —*Salar News*

Sanchar Saathi is Pegasus 2.0, says Priyank

BENGALURU,

The Sanchar Saathi app, which the Centre said would be installed in all new phones, is the Modi government's Pegasus 2.0, IT/BT Minister Priyank Kharge said. Pegasus is an Israeli software that the Indian government used to track data on phones. "A pre-installed, non-removable app that can read your calls, messages and location is an unacceptable overreach into people's lives," he said in a statement. He claimed that the BJP was chipping at the constitutional right to privacy and that there was no clarity on what they'll do with our data. "It opens up one giant backdoor on every phone," he said, adding that it will be used to keep tab on people who dissent. "This risk is immediate, it is intrusive and it is deeply concerning," he added. —*Salar News*

24 repatriated Meghalaya kids reunite at home

SHILLONG, 2 DEC

Twenty-four children repatriated from Chikkaballapur in the State, were reunited with their families in Shillong on Tuesday, following a coordinated effort by the Social Welfare Department and the Meghalaya State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR). SCPCR Chairperson Agatha Sangma emphasised that "the safe return of the children was the central focus" of the operation, thanking both Karnataka and Meghalaya authorities for their support. She revealed a recommendation for a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for relocating children, which includes prior notification to District Child Protection Officers. —*PTI*

City cops probe hoax bomb threat to airport & malls

BENGALURU, 2 DEC

The City police have registered a First Information Report (FIR) and initiated an investigation into a hoax email that threatened bomb explosions at Kempegowda International Airport and various shopping malls in the city. The email was received by the City police commissioner's official email address on 30 November at 11.53am. The threat, allegedly sent by an individual named Mohit Kumar on Gmail, stated: "This is a warning from the Jaish-e-Mohammed white collar terror team. We have targeted Kempegowda International Airport, Orion Mall, Lulu Mall, Forum South Mall, and Mantri Square Mall for bomb blasts from 7pm onwards". The email also provided a phone number, asserting that the attacks could be averted by calling it and making a payment. Authorities are searching for the suspect. —*PTI*

Politics not permanent: CM's remark creates buzz

After brekky with DKS, CM says CLP will eat lunch together

BENGALURU, 2 DEC

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's comment during an informal conversation with Congress MLA Belur Gopal Krishna that "politics is not permanent", has led to speculation amid the ongoing power tussle. Though the context of the conversation in the viral video is not clear, it is being linked with the CM change talks.

"Whatever has to happen, let it happen. Is politics my father's property? Politics is not permanent," Siddaramaiah purportedly tells Gopal Krishna, who is MLA from Sagar, as they were emerging from inside Vidhana Soudha.

Meanwhile, after the eating breakfast together, Siddaramaiah said that he and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar strategised for the upcoming legislature session in Belagavi from 8 December during the meal. Regarding the Cabinet reshuffle, Siddaramaiah said the High Command has to take a decision on it.

"We are united," Siddaramaiah said. "When the Congress Legislative Party meeting is called, all the party's MLAs will join together for lunch."

Siddaramaiah went to his Deputy's Sadashivanagar residence, where he was received by Shivakumar and his brother, former Congress MP DK Suresh, and Kunigal MLA HD Ranganath (a relative of Shivakumar). They had breakfast together, which included idli, pongal and 'nati koli' (country chicken).

Shivakumar said in a statement after the meeting that the two reaffirmed "good governance and the continued development of our State under the Congress vision. —*Agencies*

CM Siddaramaiah and DyCM DK Shivakumar speak to press at the latter's Sadashivanagar residence, Tuesday PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD

CM, DKS WEAR SAME LUXURY WATCH

Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar were spotted wearing the same brand of luxury watch, piquing interest in the State. The Cartier watch, valued at Rs 43 lakh was seen as both a show of strength and a display of wealth. BJP's official X handle targeted Siddaramaiah

calling him a false socialist. The JD(S) noted that the CM had earlier donned a Rs 70 lakh Hublot watch in 2016.

How can CM eat nati koli on Hanuman Jayanthi? Ashoka

BENGALURU, 2 DEC

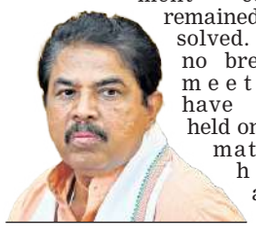
BJP leader R Ashoka took a swipe at Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his Deputy DK Shivakumar, alleging that while the two leaders were holding breakfast meetings to resolve internal issues, the Congress government had failed to address farmers' concerns and the pothole menace across the State.

Ashoka objected to the Chief Minister consuming 'nati koli' on Hanuman Jayanthi, claiming that the act had "hurt the sentiments" of devotees. He recalled that Siddaramaiah had allegedly eaten meat before visiting the Dharmasthala temple.

The Opposition Leader said the government had "lost the trust" of anganwadi workers, farmers, entrepreneurs, the working class and Dalits.

Citing civic concerns, he said more than 580 people had died due to potholes in the last 10 months in the state. "If the time spent eating breakfast had been used to hold meetings with officials on filling potholes, innocent lives could have been saved."

Ashoka added that the issues faced by sugarcane farmers regarding price fixation and problems at maize procurement centres remained unresolved. "But no breakfast meetings have been held on these matters," he added. —*PTI*



THE BELAGAVI JOB

The suspects arrived with a pushcart in Hosavontamuri village of Belagavi late Monday PHOTO: SALAR

Three men steal ATM in Belagavi on a push cart

BELAGAVI, 2 DEC

- The suspects arrived with a pushcart, lifted the ATM from the closed kiosk and loaded it onto the cart before fleeing. The suspects dumped the machine a few metres away after failing to break it open. The machine contained over Rs1 lakh in cash

Police in Belagavi district are searching for three unidentified men who allegedly stole an entire ATM from an unattended kiosk along National Highway 48 near Hosavontamuri village. The theft took place late Monday and was captured on CCTV.

According to police, the suspects arrived with a pushcart, lifted the ATM from the closed kiosk and loaded it onto the cart before fleeing. Before breaking into the machine, the thieves sprayed black paint on the sensors and CCTV lenses to prevent alarms and video recording. They then forcibly removed the ATM unit from its base.

Footage later showed two of them returning with the empty cart, indicating they had abandoned the machine nearby.

A senior police officer said preliminary inquiries revealed the ATM contained a little over Rs 1 lakh. The suspects reportedly dumped the machine a few metres away after failing to break it open. It was subsequently recovered with all cash intact.

The officer said the kiosk had been shut for about 15 days after a new ATM was opened roughly 200 metres away. With the old kiosk lacking a guard, operational sensors and even a staircase, the men were able to remove the machine without obstruction.

A case has been registered, and efforts are on to identify the suspects through CCTV footage and local intelligence inputs, police added.

Police believe this could be the work of an organised gang operating across districts.

— *Salar News with agencies*

HC grants KJ George relief in smart meter case

BENGALURU, 2 DEC

The Karnataka High Court has dismissed a private complaint against Energy Minister KJ George concerning allegations of manipulation in the tender process for the supply and installation of smart meters. Justice MI Arun issued the order on a petition from George seeking to quash the case.

Additionally, similar petitions were submitted by former Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM) Managing Director D Mahantesh Bilagi and Director of the Technical Department HJ Ramesh. The court also ordered the cessation of criminal proceedings against Bilagi, who passed away in a recent road accident.

The complaint, filed on 23 July, directed the registration of a private complaint report (PCR) against George, Bilagi, and Ramesh following allegations made by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders CN Ashwath Narayan, SR Vishwanath, and Dheeraj Muniraj.

The complainants accused George of conspiring with BESCOM officials to manipulate the smart meter tender process. They alleged that the tender was undervalued, that pre-qualification criteria were diluted.

Meanwhile, special court judge Santhosh Gajanan Bhat ordered the registration of a PCR and sought a status report from the Lokayukta Police regarding earlier complaints made by the BJP leaders concerning the tender's alleged irregularities. —*Agencies*

HANUMAN JAYANTHI

Artists dressed as lord Hanuman dance in the City near Patala Anjaneya Swamy Temple for Hanuman Jayanthi, on Tuesday PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD

Flight diverts to M'luru due to medical emergency

MANGALURU, 2 DEC

An Air India Express flight from Riyadh, bound for Thiruvananthapuram, made an emergency landing at Mangaluru International Airport in the State on Monday after a passenger developed a sudden medical complication. Flight IX 522 staff alerted the airport's Operations Control Centre regarding the urgent medical need of a passenger in his late 30s. Airport officials activated emergency protocols, coordinating rapid responses from medical teams, CISF, and customs.

Upon the landing, medical personnel assessed the passenger and arranged for immediate transfer to a tertiary-care hospital. "This incident reaffirms our commitment to prioritising passenger safety," said an MgIA spokesperson. The flight resumed its journey at 2.05am on Tuesday. —*PTI*

8 MINUTES ALLOWED

KIA to start fining for 'timepassing' at pickups

BENGALURU, 2 DEC

Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) will levy an entry fee on vehicles that overstay the eight-minute free limit in the arrival pick-up area from 8 December.

The airport's operator, BIAL, on Tuesday announced that it is introducing enhanced pick-up measures to streamline passenger movement, reduce congestion and improve safety.

"This will ease kerbside congestion and deter misuse of the pick-up zone in front of the terminals," a statement said.

Under the new lane segregation system, entry to the designated arrival pick-up zones in T1 and T2 will be free for all private cars (white-board vehicles). However, charges will apply for misuse or overstaying beyond the prescribed time limits, it said.

"The airport will give eight minutes (much higher than international standards) of free use of the zone for all users, beyond which there will be a charge of Rs 150 for overstays from 8-13 minutes and Rs 300 for 13-18 minutes. Any vehicle overstaying beyond 18 minutes will be towed to the nearest police station, and applicable fines and towing charges will be levied," it stated.

BIAL said that all commercial vehicles, including yellow-board taxis and electric cabs, are required to wait for passengers only at designated parking zones.

"The first 10 minutes of parking will be complimentary. Commercial vehicles arriving at Terminal 1 should proceed to the P4 and P3 parking zones, while those serving Terminal 2 are directed to the P2 parking zone," the statement said.

BIAL said it has recently observed an increase in unauthorised halts, roadside pick-ups and vehicles waiting outside arrival gates and exit ramps, leading to crowding and delays.

"Travellers and cab operators are encouraged to use only designated pick-up points and authorised aggregators such as Airport Taxi, Uber, Ola, Quick Ride, OHM electric cabs and WTI cabs," it said.

Any deviation—including halting in unauthorised areas, blocking lanes or overstaying beyond the permitted waiting duration—will attract fines applicable to both cab operators and individuals found in violation, it added.

Hari Marar, MD and CEO of BIAL, said, "When passengers and cab operators follow the designated process, the experience becomes quicker, safer and more convenient for everyone involved. We look forward to the support of all stakeholders in making the experience seamless". —*PTI*

TWO WEEKS OF FAILED SMUGGLING BIDS AT KIA

Customs at Bengaluru airport have seized 19.65 lakh cigarettes, 4,830 e-cigarettes, 69.67 kg ganja, and 280 tarantulas and 2,809 endangered fish between 18 and 30 November, as they clamp down on smuggling.

Former Congress MLA RV Devaraj dies at 67

BENGALURU, 2 DEC

3 DEC, 1957 - 1 DEC, 2025

Congress leader and former MLA RV Devaraj has passed away in Mysuru at the age of 67, following a heart attack on Monday night, party sources have reported.

State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah expressed his sorrow, stating, "The news of the passing of Devaraj—former MLA of the Chickpet Assembly constituency and a senior Congress leader—was deeply saddening. Devaraj, who was known for his ideological commitment and concern for the people, worked tirelessly for many years as a loyal and dedicated member of the Congress. He should have been with us for many more years." He went on to pray for "the departed soul" and strength for Devaraj's family and admirers.

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar also conveyed his condolences, describing Devaraj's death as a "profound sorrow." "His contributions to the Chickpet constituency through politics and social service are immeasurable," he remarked, adding, "May Devaraj's soul attain peace. I pray that the Almighty grants strength to his family members and admirers to bear this grief."

Devaraj was a three-time MLA, first elected from the Chamarajpet constituency in 1989 and 1999, and returned to the Assembly in 2013, representing Chickpet after a delimitation exercise. —*PTI*

'Nehru wanted Babri Masjid with public funds'

VADODARA, 2 DEC

At the Unity March (Rashtriya Padyatra) in Gujarat marking Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's 150th birth anniversary, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh highlighted historic disagreements between India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru and first deputy prime minister Patel, claiming Nehru wanted to build the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya with public funds, a proposal Patel firmly opposed. Singh said Nehru also questioned the public-funded restoration of the Somnath Temple, to which Patel clarified that its Rs 30 lakh refurbishment came from ordinary citizens. He added that after Patel's death, when people raised funds for a memorial, Nehru suggested diverting the money to wells and roads, which Singh argued reflected an attempt by the then government to hide and suppress Patel's great legacy. *—PTI*

Delhi blast case: Accused produced in Patiala Court

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

One of the accused in the Red Fort blast, Amir Rashid Ali, was produced before a Delhi court on Tuesday. Ali was produced before Principal and Sessions Judge Anju Bajaj Chandna on the conclusion of his police custody in the case. On November 29, the court sent three doctors and a preacher, who were arrested in connection with the Red Fort blast, to 10 days' judicial custody. As of now, the NIA has arrested seven persons accused in the case, which is linked to a "white-collar" terror module busted by the Jammu and Kashmir Police. Amir Rashid Ali's court proceedings are underway. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Prem Kumar elected as Bihar Assembly Speaker

PATNA, 2 DEC

Veteran BJP leader Prem Kumar has been unanimously elected as the Speaker of the Bihar Assembly. Pro-tem Speaker Narendra Narayan Yadav announced that Kumar was the sole candidate for the position, leading to his declaration as "unanimously elected" through a voice vote. The 74-year-old, who recently secured the Gaya Town seat for an unprecedented eighth term, was escorted to the Chair by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Yadav. Kumar noted that the Speaker's seat is significant as it is connected to pilgrimage spots associated with Lord Vishnu and Lord Buddha. Yadav urged, "We therefore expect you to involve us more than the ruling side," highlighting Opposition's role in reflecting government shortcomings. *—PTI*

TMC alleges Odisha police expelled Bengal migrants

KOLKATA, 2 DEC

Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra on Tuesday accused police in Odisha's Nayagarh district of unlawfully forcing four migrant workers from West Bengal to leave, despite them holding valid identity documents. She described the incident as "unconstitutional" and warned of legal action. In a post on X, Moitra tagged Nayagarh Superintendent of Police S Susree, alleging that the Odagaon police station in-charge had ordered the four Bengali migrants "all bona fide Indian citizens with full paperwork" to vacate the district. She further claimed the police pressurised their landlord to evict them and threatened them with arrest, despite verification of the workers' credentials by Murshidabad Police. "This is illegal and violates our Constitution. I will take you to court, so be prepared," he stated. *—PTI*

Invasion of privacy: Oppn flays Sanchar Saathi app

Tharoor says mandating things in a democracy is troubling

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Opposition parties on Tuesday slammed the government's directive on the Sanchar Saathi App calling it a dictatorship and an invader of citizens' privacy.

Congress on Tuesday said the government's directive on the Sanchar Saathi App smacks of dictatorship and infringes on the right to privacy of citizens.

"The Sanchar Saathi is a snooping app, and clearly it is ridiculous. Citizens have the right to privacy. Everyone must have the right to privacy to send messages to family and friends without the government looking at everything," Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra told reporters.

She said the government is turning the country into a "dictatorship" and they are refusing to talk about anything and not allowing a discussion on anything and that is why Parliament is not functioning.

GET IT ON Google Play
Download on the App Store
Sanchar Saathi
Citizen Centric Services
Report Suspected Fraud Communication
Block Your Lost/Stolen Mobile Handset
Know Mobile Connections in Your Name
Know Genuineness of Your Mobile Handset
Report Incoming International Call with Indian Number

Meanwhile, amid the Sanchar Saathi application row, senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Tuesday said making anything compulsory in a democracy is troubling and asserted that the government should explain everything to the public instead of just passing an order.

Additionally, CPI(M) leaders raised concern over the 'Sanchar Saathi' application, which the smartphone makers have been asked to mandatorily pre-install on their devices, and called it a violation of the fundamental right to privacy, and an excuse for "mass surveillance."

CPI(M) Lok Sabha MP V Sivadasan, in a statement, condemned the directive and said the move is a direct violation of the fundamental right to privacy, a right upheld by the Supreme Court of India.

In addition, AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal termed the DoT-mandated preloading of the Sanchar Saathi app on all new smartphones a "brazen attack on individual privacy" and demanded immediate withdrawal of the "diktat."

Separately, TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee, joined the opposition ranks to take on the Central Government on the activation of the Sanchar Saathi app on mobile headsets.

He said that mandating such an app by the government is completely illegal and unconstitutional. *—Agencies*

CURRENT DEADLINE ON 11 DEC

SC urges EC to extend Kerala's SIR deadline

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

The Supreme Court of India has requested the Election Commission to consider extending the deadline for submitting enumeration forms in Kerala's ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

The current deadline is 11 December, just ahead of local body elections scheduled for 9 and 11 December, with vote counting concluding on 13 December.

Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi noted that approximately 1,76,000 state government employees are engaged in the local elections, which may hinder their ability to submit the required forms by the set deadline.

"Let the state of Kerala make a request to the Election Commission citing all the reasons for the extension of date... by tomorrow 5pm," directed the Chief Justice, adding that the poll body should consider the request "sympathetically" and provide a decision within two days. *—PTI*

BLO dies after collapsing in UP

A booth-level officer (BLO) in Hathras district died on Tuesday morning after he collapsed at his residence. His family alleged he had been under severe work-related stress. The deceased, Kamlakant Sharma, 40, was serving as an assistant teacher at the Composite School Navli Lalpur. *—PTI*

Didi offers Rs 2L aid for deceased

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has declared Rs 2 lakh compensation for the families of 39 individuals allegedly deceased due to "SIR-induced panic", including several suicides linked to the ongoing revision of electoral rolls, which began last month. *—PTI*

Shafat Ahmed Shangloo, arrested in connection with the 1989 kidnapping of Rubaiyya Sayeed in Jammu, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

1989 abduction accused released, CBI red faced

JAMMU, 2 DEC

A special court has released Shafat Ahmed Shangloo, who was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in connection with the 1989 kidnapping of Rubaiyya Sayeed, daughter of then Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed.

The CBI had sought Shangloo's judicial custody, alleging his involvement in the case and claiming he was an absconding accused.

Represented by advocates Anil Raina, Suhail Dar, and Yogesh Bakshi, Shangloo's legal team argued that he was never wanted by the agency and referred to the CBI's own chargesheet, which did not implicate him.

Following the hearing, the court found the CBI's claims to be unsubstantiated, leading to Shangloo's release.

- Represented by advocates Anil Raina, Suhail Dar, and Yogesh Bakshi, Shangloo's legal team argued that he was never wanted by the agency and referred to the CBI's own chargesheet

"I was never involved in any case. I spent almost 10 years in Delhi and was a frequent traveller between Kashmir and Delhi for business," Shangloo stated, asserting that he had been falsely implicated.

The court mentioned there was no reference to Shangloo in the CBI's chargesheet concerning the kidnapping, which concluded after five days with the release of five JKLF terrorists at the behest of the then Home Minister. *—PTI*

RS returns Manipur GST bill to LS

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

The Rajya Sabha on Tuesday returned to the Lok Sabha the Manipur GST bill, which replaces an Ordinance to implement the GST 2.0 reforms in the northeastern state, with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman saying that the bill will benefit people and businesses there.

The Lok Sabha had passed the bill on Monday.

Replying to the discussion on the proposed law, Sitharaman hit out at the Opposition for shedding "crocodile tears" on Manipur and indulging in "drama" over the grievances of people of the state.

"Did the prime minister visit? Did the home minister visit? Did the law and order come to normal? Every time, about Manipur they will raise (these) issues. They will voice their grievances. Total crocodile tears," she said.

Sitharaman said the Opposition parties earlier also did not participate in a debate on a bill for Manipur's budget.

"Even today, when the GST benefits have to go to the state government because they will otherwise not earn the revenue out of it, when we are trying to have an Ordinance be converted to be a regular bill and get passed here to become an Act they are not here to participate," she said. *—PTI*

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaks during the Winter session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Tuesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Pets not allowed outside Parl but allowed inside: RaGa

Amid a row over his colleague Renuka Chowdhury bringing a stray dog to Parliament House, Congress leader **Rahul Gandhi** on Tuesday said pets are not allowed outside but "inside".

Responding to Gandhi's comments during an informal chat with reporters, BJP spokesperson Pradeep Bhandari said in an X post, "Rahul Gandhi is comparing his own Congressmen, and Opposition leaders to Dog! This is how Parivarvadi treat temple of democracy."

"Dog is the main topic of today, I believe. What has the poor dog done. The dog had come here. Why is it not allowed?" Gandhi told reporters.

Pets are not allowed here but they are allowed inside, he added while pointing to the Parliament House building.

Meanwhile, the BJP slammed Gandhi and Chowdhury for their remarks on the row over bringing a dog into the Parliament complex, alleging that they did not just hurt the decorum and dignity of Parliament but also insulted all MPs, security personnel, officers and other staff working there. *—PTI*

'Heart-attack cases data not maintained'

The data regarding cases of heart attack is not maintained centrally, the government informed Parliament on Tuesday. In a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Union Health Minister JP Nadda said, according to an ICMR study, hospitalisation with acute myocardial infarction (AMI) is associated with the presence of any known comorbidity, family history of thrombotic events and smoking. *—PTI*

Kerala BJP Chief to contest assembly election from Nemom constituency

THRISSUR, 2 DEC

BJP state president **Rajeev Chandrasekhar** on Tuesday said that he would contest in the Kerala assembly polls to be held next year from the Nemom constituency in Thiruvananthapuram.

Chandrasekhar made the announcement while speaking to reporters here as part of the party campaign for the upcoming local body polls in the state.

"I will contest in the assembly elections. Hundred per cent. I will contest from Nemom constituency," he said.

He was responding to reporters' queries whether he will be contesting in the assembly polls scheduled to be held next year.

On the issue of an AIIMS being established in Kerala, Chandrasekhar said that while he wants it in Thiruvananthapuram, Union Minister Suresh Gopi wants it in Thrissur, but it is the central and state governments which have to decide where it will be set up.

"But, our need is that an AIIMS should come to Kerala," he said.

He further claimed that the subject of setting up AIIMS in Kerala and Madurai in Tamil Nadu came up together.

The Kerala government earmarked land in Kozhikode for the institute, but in Madurai, land was acquired, he said.

"However, land is yet to be acquired in Kozhikode. The state government has not yet acquired land for it anywhere," he claimed. *—PTI*

Violence erupts during M'rashtra local body polls

MUMBAI, 2 DEC

The first phase of local body elections in Maharashtra was marred by violence at several polling stations on Tuesday, with supporters from the ruling allies BJP, NCP, and Shiv Sena clashing in multiple locations. Police reported that a case was filed against Shiv Sena MLA Santosh Bangar for breaching polling booth regulations in Hingoli city.

As voters cast their ballots across 264 municipal councils and nagar panchayats, accusations of cash distribution and bogus voting led to altercations. Despite being state-level allies, candidates from the BJP, Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena, and Ajit Pawar-led NCP competed against each other and sometimes allied with opposition parties.

Violent incidents occurred in Mahad, Gevrai, Muktai Nagar, and several other areas.

Additionally, issues arose with Electronic Voting Machines, including malfunctions and an incident where a voter damaged an EVM in Chandrapur. Counting of votes, originally set for 3 December, has been postponed to 21 December as per the Bombay High Court. *—PTI*

Third woman files rape case against Mamkootathil

T'PURAM, 2 DEC

Suspended Congress MLA **Rahul Mamkootathil** is facing his third sexual assault (SA) complaint, the most recent complaint comes was filed by a 23-year-old woman living outside Kerala. She alleges that Mamkootathil "grievously exploited, assaulted, and emotionally abused" her under the false promise of marriage. The complaint includes a detailed account of how she met Mamkootathil years ago and was allegedly assaulted in a homestay-like building after being deceived.

The latest accusation comes as police continue probing an earlier case, with an FIR registered on 28 November. Mamkootathil has been absconding for days after being booked for sexual assault and forced abortion. The latest complaint marks the third allegation since August 2025, after which he was suspended from the Congress. *—PTI*

FEARING ANOTHER STAMPEDE

Police deny nod to Vijay's rally in Puducherry

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Amid the ongoing case over the Karur stampede, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) Chief and actor Vijay is preparing for a roadshow in Puducherry as a part of his statewide outreach campaign, said sources.

According to sources, TVK sought permission from the Union Territory to conduct the roadshow from Kalapet to Kanniakoil, after which Vijay planned to conduct an address to the public near the Sonnampalayam water tank.

Despite holding a meeting with the higher officials, the party did not get approval.

- Tamil Nadu government has urged the Supreme Court to lift its 13 October order directing a CBI probe into the Karur stampede.

Meanwhile, the Tamil Nadu government has urged the Supreme Court to lift its 13 October order directing a CBI probe into the Karur stampede in which 41 people were killed and permit an investigation by the SIT constituted by the Madras High Court.

The local police and the Special Investigation Team are fully competent to conduct a "fair, thorough, and impartial investigation" and no exceptional circumstances exist to direct central agency intervention, the state government said in a reply filed before the apex court. In addition, the government has told the Supreme Court that the stampede is attributable to a series of "reckless and uncoordinated actions" by the organisers and workers of TVK. *—Agencies*

Ex-aide of gangster Bishnoi shot dead in Chandigarh

CHANDIGARH, 2 DEC

Inderpreet Singh, alias Parry, a former close aide of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi, was shot dead in Sector-26 near Timber Market on Monday night, police reported. The 35-year-old was rushed to the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research but was declared dead upon arrival. Authorities suspect the murder is linked to inter-gang rivalry, having registered a case. Parry, who was in an SUV with an unidentified companion, was attacked shortly after leaving a private club. An unverified Facebook post from "Hari Boxer Arzoo Bishnoi" claimed responsibility, alleging Parry extorted money from local clubs. Parry had a criminal past, including charges of murder, with ties to Bishnoi dating back to college.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Ranveer Singh apologises over 'Kantara' mimicry

MUMBAI, 2 DEC

Ranveer Singh has issued an apology following criticism for recreating Rishab Shetty's intense Daiva Chavundi scene during the closing ceremony of the International Film Festival of India in Goa on 30 November. In his Instagram Story, he clarified, "My intention was to highlight Rishab's incredible performance...I know how much it takes to perform that particular scene." He added, "If I have hurt anyone's sentiments, I sincerely apologise." While praising Shetty's performance, Ranveer's enthusiastic imitation drew ire online, with comments like, "Boycott upcoming Ranveer's movie Dhurandhar" and "What a foolish person he is." Sources reveal Shetty had politely asked Singh to stop mimicking Daiva before the act continued.—*Agencies*

Jaundice outbreak cover-up led to arson in VIT: Govt

BHOPAL, 2 DEC

Violence erupted on the VIT Bhopal campus on 25 November, attributed to the management's alleged cover-up of a jaundice outbreak, poor food quality, and student mistreatment, as per the report by a three-member panel. The Madhya Pradesh Higher Education Department issued a show-cause notice to the institution's chancellor, demanding a response within seven days. Nearly 4,000 students protested, resulting in vandalism. The report revealed that 35 students suffered from jaundice, with management ignoring food and water complaints. The panel noted a dictatorial campus atmosphere and highlighted management's non-cooperation during the probe.—*PTI*

ED questions actor Neha Sharma over 1xBet betting case

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Actress and model Neha Sharma appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday for questioning in a money laundering case linked to the online betting platform 1xBet. Sharma, 38, is reportedly connected to the site through various endorsements. The ED has previously attached assets worth Rs 11.14 crore belonging to former cricketers Shikhar Dhawan and Suresh Raina after their inquiries. The agency stated, "Payments for endorsements were structured through layered transactions using foreign intermediaries to disguise the illegal source of funds." The Union government has recently introduced legislation to ban real money online gaming in India. Other prominent individuals questioned include Yuvraj Singh, Sonu Sood, and Urvashi Rautela.—*PTI*

Children play on a waterlogged road following heavy rain triggered by Cyclone Ditwah, in Chennai. PHOTO: PTI

Cyclone Ditwah: Chennai on Red alert

Remnants of storm to bring heavy rains in TN

CHENNAI, 16 OCT

Chennai and surrounding districts have been placed under a red alert as the remnants of Cyclonic Storm Ditwah, now a deep depression, bring extremely heavy rainfall to north Tamil Nadu and south Andhra Pradesh, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Tuesday.

The depression, located about 35 km from the north Tamil Nadu–Puducherry coast, is expected to recurve southwest and weaken into a depression within 12 hours. "It is very likely to recurve slowly southwestwards and weaken during the next 12 hours," the IMD added.

Chennai and Thiruvallur are forecast to receive heavy rainfall with maximum temperatures around 27°C and minimum near 23°C.

From December 3, the city will experience generally cloudy skies with heavy rain, daytime highs of 29°C and nighttime lows of 24°C.

Conditions are expected to remain partly cloudy with moderate rain or thunderstorms through December 7, with daytime temperatures around 30°C and nights between 25°C and 26°C.

Overnight rain and strong winds caused tree branches to fall, with significant waterlogging reported in many areas.

Ennore recorded 26 cm of rain, while Pallikaranai received 10.5 cm in 24 hours. Wind speeds of 40–60 kmph are likely in Chennai, Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram, and Chengalpattu.

Local transport services reported minor disruptions due to waterlogging, and several low-lying areas remain under close monitoring.

As a precaution, schools and colleges in Chennai, Tiruvallur, and Kanchipuram will remain closed on 2 December.

Authorities have urged residents to avoid unnecessary travel, exercise caution, secure loose objects outdoors.

They are further advised follow official advisories issued by the state government and disaster management agencies. —*Agencies*

DELHI 2020 RIOTS

I am not a terrorist, Sharjeel tells SC

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Activist **Sharjeel Imam** told the Supreme Court on Tuesday that he was being "labelled a dangerous intellectual terrorist" without a full trial or any conviction, as he sought bail in the February 2020 Delhi riots case.

Senior advocate Siddhartha Dave, appearing for him before Justices Aravind Kumar and NV Anjaria, said Imam was arrested on 28 January 2020, before the riots began, and argued that his speeches alone could not establish conspiracy. The bench asked whether the police claim, that his speeches created a platform enabling the riots, could amount to a terrorist act. Dave said the prosecution must show further acts linking him to conspiracy, adding that Imam's "anguish lies in being labelled without trial".

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for **Umar Khalid**, said Khalid was not in Delhi when violence broke out. Playing his 17 February, 2020 Amravati speech, he said it called for peace and did not attract the UAPA.

Appearing for Gulfisha Fatima, senior advocate Abhishek Singhvi said she has spent nearly six years in custody, with charges yet to be framed and 939 witnesses listed. He questioned the police's "regime change operation" claim, noting it is absent from the chargesheet. Delhi Police opposed the bail pleas. The hearing will continue. —*PTI*

SC: Parity alone can't justify bail

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

The Supreme Court has held that parity cannot be the sole basis for granting bail, stressing that courts must evaluate each accused's specific role and circumstances. A bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and N Kotiswar Singh set aside an Allahabad High Court order granting bail to a murder accused solely because co-accused had received relief.

"Bail is the rule and jail the exception, but it cannot be granted without considering the nature of the alleged offence," the court said, noting that parity requires examining the accused's position in the crime, not merely involvement in the same incident. The verdict came in a UP murder case stemming from a village dispute. —*PTI*

TRAVEL FROM DELHI TO DEHRADUN IN JUST 2.5 HOURS

The Delhi–Saharanpur–Dehradun Expressway has opened for public trial on Monday. Once fully operational, it will reduce Delhi–Dehradun travel time from 6–6.5 hours to 2–2.5 hours. The one-month trial is toll-free, after which the expressway will be fully functional.

Length: 210km

Cost: ₹12,000 crore

Starts at **Akshardham Temple in Delhi** and ends in **Dehradun, Uttarakhand.** Passes via UP

On the 210km, 12km of it is an elevated section near eco-sensitive zone of the Rajaji National Park with animal underpasses. It is designed especially for elephant movement.

User facilities (Every 25–30km)

- Wayside amenities
- Rest areas
- Parking zones
- First-aid units

Census slated in two phases starting April

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Census 2027 will be conducted in two phases between April 2026 and February 2027, the Lok Sabha was informed on Tuesday. Responding to a question from Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai said Phase I will involve House Listing and the Housing Census, while Phase II will cover Population Enumeration (PE).

The first phase, between April and September 2026, will be carried out over 30 days, depending on the convenience of state and UT administrations. PE will take place in February 2027 with a reference date of 00.00hours on 1 March, 2027. However, Ladakh, snowbound areas of J&K, and parts of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand will conduct enumeration in September 2026, with a reference date of 1 October, 2026.

Rai said the census questionnaire is finalised after incorporating suggestions from ministries, departments, organisations and data users. He added that the census, with a history of over 150 years, relies on learnings from previous exercises.

He confirmed that caste enumeration will also be carried out, as approved by the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs on 30 April.

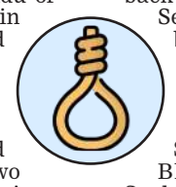
Census 2027 will be held digitally, using mobile apps and a self-enumeration option. —*PTI*

IAS officer's daughter dies over dowry

TADEPALLI, 2 DEC

A 25-year-old woman, daughter of an IAS officer, allegedly died by suicide at her parental home in Guntur district after earlier accusing her husband of dowry harassment, police said on Tuesday. Her parents broke open the bathroom door when she did not come out for a long time and found her hanging, Mangalagiri DSP Murali Krishna told PTI.

Police identified the woman as Madhuri Sahitibai, who had married Rajesh Naidu of Bugganapalli village in Nandyal district. She had discontinued her BTech course due to backlogs before entering the relationship. The couple married on 5 March and informed both families two days later, with the marriage registered subsequently.



A few months ago, Sahitibai reportedly called her parents alleging dowry harassment, after which they brought her back home in early September. She had been staying with them since, police said.

A case has been registered under Section 80 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, which deals with dowry deaths. Help is available. Please call Tele Manas at 14416, SAHAI at 080-25497777 for support. —*PTI*

MERIT ALONE GUIDES VAISHNO DEVI COLLEGE ADMISSIONS: OMAR

RAJOURI/JAMMU, 2 DEC

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said admissions to the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence must remain entirely merit-based under NEET, stressing that "seats cannot be distributed on the basis of religion."

He said students selected through NEET were now being unfairly targeted over their faith, which neither law nor university policy permits.

Abdullah criticised demands for religion-based quotas, saying such changes would require giving up government grants and free land. —*PTI*

Man gives triple talaq 3 days after marriage

THANE, 2 DEC

Police in Bhiwandi have filed a case against a Uttar Pradesh resident for allegedly harassing his wife for dowry and pronouncing triple talaq within three days of their marriage.

The complaint filed on Sunday, stated the woman, 25, from Thane married Mohammad Rashid on 19 October and later travelled to his village, Nanhui, in UP's Sultanpur district. She alleged that her in-laws began mistreating her immediately, claiming the gifts provided by her family were inadequate.

Her family had given a gold ring, a watch and multiple household items, including a cupboard, bed, sofa set, refrigerator, air conditioner, washing machine and mixer. Despite this, the in-laws allegedly demanded a Bullet motorcycle as dowry. The woman stated that Rashid divorced her through the banned triple talaq method on 21 October and assaulted her.

An FIR has been filed against Rashid, his parents and two sisters under BNS, the Dowry Prohibition Act and the Muslim Women Act, but no arrests made yet. —*PTI*

Bomb threat diverts Kuwait–Hyd flight to Mumbai

MUMBAI, 2 DEC

A Hyderabad-bound IndiGo flight from Kuwait made an emergency landing in Mumbai on Tuesday after authorities received a bomb threat, officials said.

IndiGo flight 6E1234, an Airbus A321neo, was diverted to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, where it landed safely at 7.45am. A "full emergency" was declared at 6.33am following a threat email received at Hyderabad airport. A Bomb Threat Assessment Committee convened there later deemed the threat "specific".

IndiGo said it informed all relevant authorities and followed established security protocols but did not disclose the number of passengers on board. The threat is under investigation.

The incident comes amid a series of recent hoax and real threat alerts reported across multiple airports. On 12 November, IndiGo's internal grievance portal detected a bomb threat email referencing airports in Delhi, Chennai and Goa, triggering precautionary checks at all three locations. Delhi Police said the message prompted a coordinated response by security agencies, the CISF and the Delhi Fire Service. A call received around 4pm alleging an explosive at Delhi Airport's Terminal 3 was later confirmed to be a hoax after inspections.

Similar threat alerts were also reported earlier at airports in Mumbai and Hyderabad. Officials said Tuesday's threat to flight 6E1234 is being treated with heightened scrutiny due to recent patterns of disruptive messages targeting major airports.—*Agencies*

Tata takes over Ayodhya Museum in UP

LUCKNOW, 2 DEC

The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet on Tuesday approved expanding the planned Ayodhya temple museum, tasking Tata Sons with developing and operating it on a 52-acre site.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna said Tata Sons will build a state-of-the-art museum and run it through a not-for-profit SPV under its CSR commitments, with Union and state representatives on the board.

An MoU between the Centre, the state and Tata Sons for land allocation was signed on 3 September 2024.

The state had earlier cleared the transfer of 25 acres of nazul land in Manjha Jamthara village for 90 years, but Tata Sons later sought more land to align with the project's scale.

An additional 27.102 acres will now be allocated as daily footfall in Ayodhya rises to 2–4 lakh. —*PTI*

Delhi air crisis: Parents seek NHRC action

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Delhi woke to another toxic morning on Tuesday, with AQI rising to 340 at 9am from 301 a day earlier, keeping it in the 'very poor' category. Chandni Chowk and Vivek Vihar stations recorded 'severe' levels above 400, CPCB's Sameer app showed.

Amid worsening air, Warrior Moms urged the National Human Rights Commission to act suo motu, calling pollution a "persistent and preventable" crisis violating children's right to life. The group warned prolonged exposure is causing irreversible lung and cognitive damage, turning childhood into a daily hazard.

Calling it a rights issue, not just environmental, they alleged systemic negligence and failure. They sought AQI-linked school closures, real-time parent alerts, filtered-air classrooms, and curbs on construction and heavy vehicles on high-pollution days. "Every day of delay means lifelong harm," tthe mothers said. —*PTI*

Vehicles move over Barapullah flyover on a smoggy winter morning, in New Delhi. Delhi's air quality remained in the 'very poor' category for the 14th consecutive day PHOTO: PTI

CANCELLED IN LAST MINUTE

IITs ban 20 firms for revoking job offers

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Over 20 companies have been barred from the ongoing placement season at premier Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) after they rescinded job offers made to students during the last academic session, some as late as June and July, just days before scheduled joining dates.

IIT officials said the sudden revocations derailed career plans and affected students' mental well-being, prompting a collective decision to ban these firms from participating this year.

The blacklist, finalised by placement coordinators from 15 IITs, includes several data analytics and software firms that withdrew offers across multiple campuses. Some were also found to have reduced previously committed salary packages. While barred from campus hiring, these companies may still recruit students through off-campus processes. An IIT Bombay computer science graduate from the 2025 batch said his nearly Rs 30-lakh offer was revoked on 29 May, just two days before his joining date. "Fortunately, I got a better offer through an alumnus, but many of my peers struggled. By June and July, it becomes difficult for the institutes to help as phase II ends by then," he said. Several affected students across IITs faced similar last-minute cancellations.

A senior professor involved in placements said, "We examined past records too. Some of these companies had a pattern of revoking offers, and many IITs had already banned them." He added that placement teams are reaching out to higher authorities in these firms to discuss concerns.

Despite market sluggishness, IITs are pushing for broader participation this year. —*Agencies*

IIT officials said the sudden revocations derailed career plans and affected students' mental well-being PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Rohingya Muslim women, who crossed over from Myanmar stretch their arms out to collect sanitary products distributed by aid agencies in a refugee camp **PHOTO: PTI**

Intruders need no red carpet: SC on Rohingyas' legal status

The Supreme Court on Tuesday sharply questioned the legal status of Rohingyas living in India and asked whether "intruders" should be given a "red carpet welcome" while the country's own citizens grapple with poverty.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi made sharp observations while hearing a habeas corpus (bring the person) petition filed by rights activist Rita Manchanda alleging disappearance of few Rohingyas from the custody of authorities here.

Now, the hearing in the case has been adjourned to 16 December.

The counsel alleged certain Rohingyas were picked up by Delhi Police in May and there was no information about their whereabouts.

"If they do not have legal status to stay in India, and you are an intruder, we have a very sensitive border in the north India side. If an intruder comes, do we give them a red-carpet welcome saying we would like to give you all facilities" the CJI asked, adding, "What is the problem in sending them back."

He said India is a country with a lot of poor people, and we should rather focus on them.

"First you enter, you cross the border illegally. You dug a tunnel or crossed the fence and entered India illegally. Then you say, now that I have entered, your laws must apply to me and say, I am entitled to food, I am entitled to shelter, my children are entitled to education. Do we want to stretch the law like this," the CJI asked.

The petitioner referred to an apex court order of 2020 in which it was said that Rohingyas must be deported only according to procedure.

"We also have poor people in the country. They are citizens. Are they not entitled to certain benefits and amenities? Why not concentrate on them? It is true, even if somebody has entered illegally, we should not subject them to third-degree methods...You are asking writ of habeas to bring them back," CJI Kant asked.

The bench said if repatriation is sought then it may give rise to "logistical issues".

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said the plea has not been filed by an affected person and the petitioner has no locus to file such a plea.

On July 31, the top court, while hearing a batch of pleas concerning Rohingyas in the country, had said the first major issue to be dealt with in cases concerning Rohingyas is whether they are refugees or illegal entrants.

It said once that is decided, the other issues might be consequential.

"The first major issue is simple, are they refugees or illegal entrants," Justice Kant observed.

The bench took note of the broad issues that arose for its consideration in the pleas relating to Rohingyas.

"Whether the Rohingyas are entitled to be declared as refugees? If so, what protections, privileges or rights are they entitled to," the bench asked.

It said the second issue is if the Rohingyas are not refugees and are illegal entrants, whether the action of the Centre and states in deporting them was justified.

"Even if the Rohingyas have been held to be illegal entrants, can they be detained indefinitely or they are entitled to be released on bail, subject to such conditions as the court may deem fit to be imposed," it asked.

The court said the other issue raised in the petitions is whether the Rohingyas, who have not been detained and are living in refugee camps, have been provided basic amenities like drinking water, sanitation and education.

"If the Rohingyas are illegal entrants, whether the government of India and the states are obligated to deport them in accordance with law," it noted.

The bench segregated the pleas in three groups, one relating to Rohingyas, another not pertaining to the issue of Rohingyas and one plea that it said pertains to a different matter altogether.

It said the three groups of matters would be determined separately and it would fix those for hearing on consecutive Wednesdays.

The bench indicated that on the point of those who were found to be illegal entrants and on the question of the State's responsibility to deport them, it could only lay down the principles.

On 16 May, the apex court had rapped some petitioners who had claimed that 43 Rohingya refugees, including women and children, were dropped in the Andaman sea for deportation to Myanmar and said "when the country is passing through a difficult time, you come out with fanciful ideas".

It had questioned the authenticity of the material placed before it by petitioner Mohammad Ismail and others and refused to stay any further deportation of Rohingyas, saying a similar relief was denied by the court earlier.

On May 8, the top court had said if the Rohingya refugees in the country were found to be foreigners under Indian laws, they would have to be deported.

The court had then referred to its earlier order and remarked that the identity cards issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) may not be of any help to them under the laws. *—PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR سالار

AI's impact could worsen gaps between rich, poor: UN

Behind the hoopla over the promise of artificial intelligence lay difficult realities, including how such technology might affect people already disadvantaged in a data-driven world.

A new report by the United Nations Development Programme notes most of the gains from AI are likely to be reaped by wealthy nations unless steps are taken to use its power to help close gaps in access to basic needs, as well as such advanced know-how.

The report released Tuesday likens the situation to the "Great Divergence" of the industrial revolution, when many Western countries saw rapid modernisation while others fell behind.

Questions over how companies and other institutions will use AI are a near universal concern given its potential to change or replace some jobs done by people with computers and robots.

But while much of the attention devoted to AI focuses on productivity, competitiveness and growth, the more important question is what it will mean for human lives, the authors note.

It's an issue for communities where most people are still struggling to access skills, electric power and internet connectivity, for older people, for people displaced by war, civil conflict and climate disasters. At the same time, such people may be "invisible" in data that will not take them into account, the report said.

"As a general-purpose technology, AI can lift productivity, spark new industries, and help latecomers catch up," the report says.

Better advice on farming, analysis of X-rays within seconds and faster medical diagnoses, more effective weather forecasts and damage assessments hold promise for rural communities and areas prone to natural disasters.

"AI systems that analyse poverty, health, and disaster risks enable faster, fairer, and more transparent decisions, turning data into continuous learning and public value," it says.

Still, even in wealthy nations like the United States, the potential for data centres to devour too large a share of electricity and water has raised concerns. Ramping up power generation to meet higher demand may hinder progress in limiting the emissions of carbon from burning fossil fuels that contribute to global warming, while also causing health hazards.

The technology raises ethical, privacy and cybersecurity concerns: researchers have found hackers using AI to automate portions of cyberattacks. There also is the problem of deepfakes that can misinform or facilitate criminal activity.

Asian nations including China, Japan, South Korea and Singapore are well placed to take advantage of AI tools, the report notes, while places like Afghanistan, the Maldives and Myanmar lack skills, reliable power and other resources needed to tap into the computing potential of AI.

Inequalities between regions within countries mean some places even in advanced economies are prone to be left behind.

About a quarter of the Asia-Pacific region lacks online access, the report says. If such gaps are not closed, many millions may be excluded from the kinds of devices, digital payment systems, digital IDs and education and skills that are required to participate fully in the global economy.

They may be "stranded on the wrong side of an AI-driven global economy," it says. Other risks include misinformation and disinformation, surveillance that violates rights to privacy and systems that can act as "black boxes," reinforcing biases against minorities or other groups. So transparency and effective regulations are crucial guardrails for ensuring AI is used in fair and accountable ways, it says.

"AI is becoming the region's next essential infrastructure, like power, roads, and schools, with faster upsides and sharper risks," the report says, urging governments to invest more in providing digital infrastructure, education and training, fair competition and social protections.

"The goal," it says, "is to democratise access to AI so that every country and community can benefit while protecting those most at risk from disruption." *—PTI*

A new report by United Nations Development Programme notes most of the gains from AI are likely to be reaped by wealthy nations **PHOTO: AI**

Bhopal gas tragedy: Union Carbide's toxic ash still awaits disposal

Nearly five months after the toxic waste, soil and packaging material linked to the Bhopal gas tragedy was incinerated at a plant in Pithampur in Madhya Pradesh, around 900 tonnes of ash generated in the process is still lying without disposal.

The incineration of entire 358 tonnes of matter - 337 tonnes of toxic waste, 19 tonnes of contaminated soil and 2.2 tonnes of packaging material - from the defunct Union Carbide factory had concluded in the beginning of July this year, over six months after the consignment was brought to the unit from Bhopal.

The waste was burned in an incinerator using a scientific process, mixing lime and other materials, producing approximately 900 tonnes of ash, officials said.

They said the state government had planned to bury the generated ash in a landfill cell under construction on the premises of the Pithampur plant, located near Tarpura, a village with a population of about 20,000, in Dhar district.

However, nearly two months back, the Madhya Pradesh High Court directed the state government to find an alternative site to dispose of the ash saying its disposal near human habitation is "unacceptable".

According to officials, the ash is currently safely stored in the plant's leak-proof storage shed.

At least 5,479 people were killed and thousands were maimed after the highly toxic methyl isocyanate gas leaked from the Union Carbide's pesticide factory in Bhopal on the intervening night of 2-3 December, 1984, making it one of the biggest industrial disasters in the world.

The Jabalpur bench of the high court on 8 October this year rejected a proposal to bury the ash of the waste in a landfill cell being constructed on the Pithampur plant's premises, stating that the facility was too close to human habitation.

The court referred to an interim application filed by an intervener, which stated that tests had found mercury levels in the toxic ash to be above the permissible limit.

The application has been filed by the intervener, which discloses that the tests conducted on the toxic ash still reveal the presence of mercury, which is higher than the permissible limits as disclosed in the Madhya Pradesh Pollution Control Board's report dated 12 August, 2025, the HC said.

It also directed the state government to file a report citing alternative sites for containment of this ash.

The state is directed to file a report citing alternative sites for containment. It must also inform the court whether a global tender was floated in order to obtain the best technical expertise of companies or agencies, which may have unimpeachable technical prowess in executing a work of this nature and have dealt with similar cases of containment of toxic chemical waste, it said.

The government officials refuse to comment on the disposal plan, saying the matter was sub judice.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity, an official, however, told PTI that the contract awarded to a private company for the disposal of Union Carbide waste includes burying the ash in a dedicated landfill cell within the Pithampur plant premises. The construction of this landfill cell is in its final stages, he said.

Pithampur, about 30 km from Indore, is a major industrial area. It houses at least 1,250 units, employing thousands, including migrant workers from various states.

Social activists are not in favour of burying the ash in a landfill cell at a waste disposal unit adjacent to human habitation.

Hemant Kumar Hirole, head of local organisation 'Pithampur Bachao Samiti', said the toxic ash should be disposed of in a secluded area, because in the event of an accident, a malfunction in the landfill cell could cause serious harm to humans and the environment.

Hirole's petition is among five petitions being heard simultaneously by the HC regarding the Union Carbide waste.

He said, "At present, we have no information on whether the state government has selected an alternative site for the disposal of the toxic ash."

Over the past four decades, several plans to dispose of the toxic waste at plants in India and abroad were made and cancelled amid protests. However, it was finally incinerated and reduced to ashes this year at a waste disposal plant operated by a private company in Pithampur.

The State Pollution Control Board officials claimed that emissions of particulate matter, sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulfide, hydrogen fluoride, and nitrogen oxides, as well as mercury, cadmium, and other heavy metals, were found to be within standard limits during the incineration of the factory waste.

They also said the incineration of Union Carbide factory waste at the Pithampur plant did not cause any adverse health effects to plant workers or residents of the surrounding areas.

The waste was transported to the Pithampur plant, about 250 km from Bhopal, on 2 January this year. This led to several protests in Pithampur. Protesters expressed concerns about the potential harm to human populations and the environment from the disposal of this waste, a claim the state government flatly dismissed.. *—PTI*

At least 5,479 people were killed and thousands were maimed after the highly toxic methyl isocyanate gas leaked from the Union Carbide's pesticide factory in Bhopal on the night of 2-3 December, 1984 **PHOTO: FILE**

PHOTO: SCREENSHOT

Canada joins EU defence fund amid shift from US

TORONTO, 2 DEC

Canada has officially joined a significant European Union defence fund, as announced by Prime Minister Mark Carney's office. This initiative allows Canadian defence firms access to the 150 billion (USD 170 billion) EU loan programme known as Security Action for Europe (SAFE), facilitating affordable loans for military equipment procurement. "Canada's participation in SAFE will fill key capability gaps, expand markets for Canadian suppliers, and attract European defence investment into Canada," Carney stated. As the first non-EU country to participate, Canada aims to diversify its military spending away from the US, where over 70 cents of every military capital dollar is currently allocated. Carney's government is also exploring alternatives to US F-35 fighter jets. *—PTI*

Israel kills 4 Palestinians across Gaza & West Bank

DEIR AL BALAH, 2 DEC

Israeli forces killed four Palestinians, including journalist Mohamed Wadi, in Gaza and the West Bank on Tuesday, escalating tensions in the region. Wadi was fatally struck by an Israeli drone in Khan Younis, while another man was shot near Bureij refugee camp, according to health officials. Over 350 Palestinians have died since a ceasefire commenced on 11 October. In the West Bank, two suspects were shot dead after the separate assaults on Israeli soldiers. The Palestinian Health Ministry reported an 18-year-old was killed near Ramallah. Additionally, the Israeli military demolished the home of Abdul Karim Sanoubar, accused of previous attacks. *—PTI*

BNP thanks Modi for message on ex-PM Zia's health

DHAKA, 2 DEC

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) expressed deep gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his concern over the deteriorating health of former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. Modi stated he was "deeply concerned" and extended support for her recovery. Zia, aged 80, has been critically ill since being admitted to Dhaka's Evercare Hospital on November 23 due to severe chest infections affecting her heart and lungs. Her condition has worsened, leading to her placement on ventilation. BNP Vice-Chairman Ahmed Aazam Khan, stated, "She is in a very critical condition." Meanwhile, Zia's son, Tarique Rahman, is preparing to return from London. *—Agencies*

Afghan Taliban publicly execute mass murderer

KABUL, 2 DEC

Afghanistan's Taliban authorities carried out a public execution at a stadium in the eastern city of Khost on Tuesday, putting to death a man who the country's Supreme Court said had killed 13 members of a family, including several children, earlier this year. Tens of thousands of people, including relatives of the victims, attended the execution in the sports stadium, which the Supreme Court said was the 11th carried out since the Taliban seized power in 2021 in the wake of the chaotic withdrawal of US and NATO forces. The man was shot to death by a relative of those he was convicted of having killed, said Khost police spokesman Mustaghfir Gorbaz. The relatives were given a choice between forgiveness and reconciliation, but opted for the death penalty, the court said. *—PTI*

Russia claims control of Pokrovsk

Zelenskyy says fighting is still ongoing in the strategically important city

MOSCOW/ KYIV/ PARIS, 2 DEC

The Kremlin claimed that Russian forces have captured the key Ukrainian city of Pokrovsk in the eastern Donetsk region. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, however, said that fighting was still ongoing on Monday.

Pokrovsk sits along the eastern front line in part of what has been dubbed the "fortress belt" of Donetsk. The line of heavily fortified cities is crucial to Ukraine's defence of the region, including Kramatorsk, Sloviansk and Druzhkivka.

Russia released footage of soldiers capturing the city. President Vladmir Putin insisted that the Russian troops "are increasing pressure along the entire front line" and "along the entire line of contact, the initiative is entirely in the hands of our Armed Forces".

However, speaking to reporters in Paris, Zelenskyy also rejected Russia's earlier claim of capturing the city of Kupiansk in the Kharkiv region. He said that Kyiv's troops "cleared out" almost all of Russian forces in Kupiansk.

Zelenskyy claimed that Putin would use Pokrovsk to pressure Ukraine to concede territory in a peace deal.

The Kremlin also condemned Ukrainian strikes on Russian oil infrastructure over the weekend, including an attack on an oil terminal owned by the Caspian Pipeline Consortium, or CPC, and another that targeted two "shadow fleet" tankers in Turkish waters. Turkey reported that another tanker was hit on Tuesday.

DRONE STRIKES CONTINUE

A Russian missile strike around midday Monday killed four people and wounded 40 others, 11 critically, in the eastern city of Dnipro.

Russia's Ministry of Defence said its forces had destroyed 32 Ukrainian drones overnight. *—Agencies*

US' Witkoff to meet Putin; Zelenskyy says deal looks better

MOSCOW, 2 DEC

US special envoy Steve Witkoff was set to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Tuesday, and discuss the peace plan that Washington hopes can bring about an end to the nearly four-year war in Ukraine.

Simultaneously, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the peace plan "it looks better" after a Ukrainian delegation went to the US to renew the plan. Zelenskyy was speaking after meeting French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday. Macron said they had both spoken to Witkoff by the phone, while Zelenskyy went to Ireland. European leaders are trying to figure out how they can fund Ukraine's fight beyond this year. *—PTI*

UK and US agree on zero-tariff for pharmaceuticals

WASHINGTON, 2 DEC

The UK has secured a 0 per cent tariff rate for all UK medicines exported to the US for at least three years, officials have said, in return for the UK spending more on new medicines. Under the deal, the US agreed to exempt UK-origin pharmaceuticals, pharmaceutical ingredients, and medical technology from import taxes, the officials said on Monday. The Trump administration said in return UK drugs firms committed to invest more in the US and create more jobs.

The UK government said the 0 per cent rate on all of its pharmaceuticals exports was the lowest offered to any country. As part of the deal, it said the country's National Health Service will spend around 25 per cent more in new and effective treatments — the first major increase in such spending in over two decades.

Earlier this year, Trump and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer agreed on a framework for a trade pact that would slash US import taxes on British cars, steel and aluminium in return for greater access to the British market for US products, including beef and ethanol. *—PTI*

Navy authorised 2nd strike on Venezuelan boat: US

US strikes on alleged drug boats in the Caribbean and Pacific have killed at least 80 people *PHOTO: X*

WASHINGTON, 2 DEC

The White House has said that a Navy admiral ordered a second strike on an alleged drug boat in the Caribbean Sea and insists that a September attack that has come under bipartisan scrutiny was lawful.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt justified the 2 September "double tap" strike after lawmakers from both parties on Sunday supported a congressional reviews of military strikes in region. The lawmakers cited a Washington Post report that said Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth verbally said "kill everybody" after the first strike left two survivors.

Leavitt on Monday did not dispute that there were survivors after the initial strike. President Donald Trump earlier said that he "wouldn't have wanted that — not a second strike".

"Hegseth authorised Admiral (Frank) Bradley to conduct these kinetic strikes," said Leavitt. Bradley was the commander of Joint Special Operations Command at the time.

Lawmakers said the reports of attacking survivors posed serious legal concerns. "(It is) a war crime if true," said Sen Tim Kaine.

Trump defended Hegseth on Sunday. "Pete said he did not order the death of those two men. I believe him."

At least 80 people have been killed the strikes on small boats that the US alleges smuggle narcotics. Trump said that he spoke with Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro amid the rising tensions. *—PTI*

TRUMP'S MRI SAYS HE'S 'PERFECTLY NORMAL'

Trump's doctor said the President had MRI imaging on his heart and abdomen in October as part of a preventative screening for men his age, according to a memo from the physician released by the White House. Sean Barbabella said that the cardiovascular and abdominal imaging was "perfectly normal". Although the scan was done in October, the White House released the results only on Monday.

DHS SECRETARY CALLS FOR 'FULL TRAVEL BAN'

US Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said on X that she met Trump and called for a "full travel ban" on people from countries that "flood our nation with killers, leeches, and entitlement junkies." Her assertion comes as the Trump administration cracks down on "third world countries" after an Afghan national shot at two National Guard members in Washington, DC.

Imran alive but mentally tortured: Sister

ISLAMABAD, 2 DEC

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan is alive but subjected to "mental torture in solitary confinement", his sister Dr Uzma Khan said on Tuesday after meeting him at Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail.

The rare visit came after weeks of an unannounced ban on visitation, which had intensified speculation about his well-being. His sons and family had demanded that the Pakistani government provided proof of life, because the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader had not been seen for weeks.

The PTI in a statement on Thursday said that Uzma, was permitted to meet Imran after people gathered outside the Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail in protest. Upon her return, she also confirmed that Khan's health looks fine.

She claimed that Imran said the authorities were "mentally torturing" him as he is kept in his cell for most part of the day and allowed to go out only for a brief time. She also quoted Imran as saying that he was not allowed to communicate.

Earlier, lawyers chanting "Aazadi" gathered outside the Islamabad High Court. The government imposed Section 144, (ban on gathering of four or more people) in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. *—PTI*

Rescuers search for victims at a village affected by flash flooding, in Agam, West Sumatra, Indonesia *PHOTO: PTI*

Asian flood toll rises to 1,300

BATANG TORU, 2 DEC

Emergency crews raced to reach survivors and recover more bodies Tuesday as the death toll from last week's catastrophic floods and landslides surged past 1,300 in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand, with more than 800 people missing.

Days of heavy rains inundated vast areas, leaving thousands stranded and many clinging to rooftops and trees waiting for help. The flooding and landslides killed at least 1,358 people, with 712 people confirmed dead in Indonesia, 465 in Sri Lanka and 181 in Thailand, authorities said Tuesday. Sri Lanka's President, Anura Kumara Dissanayake, said it's too early to determine the exact number of dead.

In Indonesia, the hardest-hit nation, rescuers struggled to access villages on Sumatra island, where roads have been washed out, and bridges collapsed. At least 507 people remain missing, according to the country's National Disaster Management Agency. Helicopters and boats have been deployed, but officials warn that worsening weather was slowing operations.

India's disaster force in Sri Lanka said it rescued a nine-month pregnant woman. *—PTI*

Hong Kong launches inquiry into deadly fire amid pressure

HONG KONG, 2 DEC

Hong Kong has announced the establishment of an independent inquiry committee, led by a judge, to investigate the cause of a devastating apartment fire that claimed at least 151 lives last week. Chief Executive John Lee stated the need for "systemic change" in the construction industry to prevent a recurrence of such tragedies. "We must uncover the truth, ensure justice is served, let the deceased rest in peace, and provide comfort to the living," he affirmed at a press conference. The fire occurred on Wednesday at the Wang Fuk Court complex in Tai Po, affecting seven of its eight towers and leaving many residents homeless. Currently, 40 individuals remain in hospital, while 30 others are still unaccounted for.

Lee said that 14 arrests have been made. *—PTI*

'Sudan to host Russia's 1st naval base in Africa'

CAIRO, 2 DEC

Sudan will allow Russia to establish its first naval base in Africa on the Red Sea coast, The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) said. This deal finalises a long-delayed deal that grants Moscow a crucial logistical and military foothold on one of the world's most critical maritime trade routes

Russian state-media TASS reported in November that a draft agreement was cleared by the government after Sudanese officials presented the proposal in October. The agreement says that four warships may stay at the naval logistics base, including "naval ships with the nuclear propulsion system" under a 25-year proposal.

Moscow would have the right to station up to 300 troops at Port Sudan or another, yet-to-be-named Red Sea facility, WJ reported. The Kremlin would also get the inside track on lucrative mining concessions in Sudan, the third-largest gold producer in Africa.

The Red Sea is a crucial waterway, connecting the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean via the Suez Canal and handling approximately 12 per cent of global maritime trade. By establishing a presence here, Russia joins the US and China, which already operate bases in nearby Djibouti.

Notably, Russian troops and mercenaries are scattered around the continent, from Equatorial Guinea, Burkina Faso to the Central African Republic. Despite the notorious Wagner group's official presence reducing in Africa, there have been several shell companies sending mercenaries to several countries, independent reports claimed. *—Agencies*

MASS EXODUS IN SUDAN AS KILLINGS CONTINUE

At least than 1,600 Sudanese civilians fled the town of Kertala in South Kordofan in a day, as the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) expanded its presence, a UN body said. Meanwhile, the RSF said the Sudan Armed Force killed at least 40 people in a strike in South Kordofan. The RSF also reportedly seized the town of Babanusa in West Kordofan, which hosts a government

'FASTEST GROWING EPIDEMIC'

200% surge in HIV cases in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 2 DEC

Pakistan is currently experiencing one of the fastest-growing epidemics of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, with new infections increasing by 200 per cent over the past 15 years. The cases rose from 16,000 in 2010 to 48,000 in 2024.

This information was shared with participants of a walk organised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNAIDS for World AIDS Day. Under the theme "Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response," WHO and UNAIDS collaborated with Pakistan's Ministry of Health to commemorate the day.

The spread was reportedly largely due to unsafe blood management and injection practices, deficiencies in infection prevention and control, inadequate HIV testing during antenatal care, unprotected sexual activities, stigma, and restricted access to HIV services.

It is estimated that 350,000 individuals are living with HIV in Pakistan

At least 350,000 individuals are living with HIV in Pakistan, but nearly 80 per cent of those affected are unaware of their status. Children are increasingly impacted, with new cases among those aged 0-14 rising from 530 in 2010 to 1,800 in 2023.

- Children are increasingly impacted, with new cases among those aged 0-14 rising from 530 in 2010 to 1,800 in 2023. In many outbreaks, 80 per cent of the identified cases involved children

Only about 21 per cent of people living with HIV knew their status in 2024; 16 per cent of these individuals were on treatment, and 7 per cent had achieved viral load suppression. In 2024, there were over 1,100 reported AIDS-related fatalities. In many outbreaks, more than 80 per cent of the identified cases involved children. *—ANI*

6 dead as woman bomber strikes in Balochistan

KARACHI, 2 DEC

A female suicide bomber from the banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) detonated herself at the entrance of the Frontier Corps (FC) headquarters in the Chagai district of Balochistan, leading to a gunfight that resulted in the deaths of six militants.

The bomber, Zinata Rafiq, struck on Sunday night, prompting an assault by militants on the compound.

Three attackers were killed at the entrance, while the remaining three, who entered the headquarters, were also neutralised by security forces.

Meanwhile, four people, including North Waziristan Assistant Commissioner Shah Waliullah and two policemen, were killed in an ambush in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The attack, occurring in Bannu, has been condemned by Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Afridi, who insisted that "anti-state elements cannot undermine our resolve through such cowardly acts." *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold declines by Rs 1,670 to Rs 1.31 lakh/10g

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Gold prices plunged Rs 1,670 to Rs 1,31,530 per 10g in the national capital on Tuesday, amid weak trends in the international markets, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at Rs 1,33,200 per 10g in the previous market session. However, silver extended its rally for the sixth straight session and soared Rs 4,360 to Rs 1,81,360 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes). It had closed at Rs 1,77,000 per kilogram on Monday, as per the association. On the global front, spot gold fell by USD 45.17, or 1.07 per cent, to USD 4,187 per ounce, while silver was trading 1.77 per cent lower at USD 56.97 per ounce. *—PTI*

Wakefit sets price band for Rs 1,289 crore IPO

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Wakefit Innovations Ltd, the Bengaluru-based home and furnishings company, plans to raise Rs 1,289 crore through its initial public offering (IPO), which opens for subscription on 8 December and closes on 10 December. The company has set a price band of Rs 185–Rs 195 per share, valuing the business at nearly Rs 6,400 crore. Anchor investors will be allotted shares on 5 December. The IPO consists of a fresh issue of shares worth up to Rs 377.18 crore and an Offer for Sale of 4,67,54,405 shares, estimated at roughly Rs 912 crore. Promoters Ankit Garg and Chaitanya Ramalingegowda, along with several institutional investors including Peak XV Partners, Verlinvest SA and Investcorp funds, will sell shares through the OFS. Founded in 2016, Wakefit operates five manufacturing facilities and reported Rs 724 crore in revenue and Rs 35.5 crore profit. *—PTI*

Adani Group acquires Trade Castle Tech Park

NEW DELI, 2 DEC

Adani Enterprises Ltd, the flagship firm of business tycoon Gautam Adani's group, on Tuesday said it has completed a Rs 231.34 crore acquisition of Trade Castle Tech Park (TCTPPL), an infrastructure developer which owns sizeable land parcels. AdaniConneX (ACX), a joint venture of Adani Enterprises Ltd and data centre operator EdgeConneX, had executed a share purchase agreement on 21 November, 2025 with TCTPPL and Shree Naman Developers and Jayesh Shah (existing shareholders of TCTPPL) to acquire 100 per cent stake in TCTPPL. The acquisition was to set up infrastructure facilities, it had said without elaborating. The purchase consideration for the acquisition is Rs 231.34 crore, Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL) had said on 21 November. *—PTI*

Delhi launches ride-hailing app 'Bharat Taxi'

NEW DELI, 2 DEC

'Bharat Taxi', a ride-hailing app service backed by eight top cooperative organisations, on Tuesday began a pilot operation in the national capital, as it looks to rival established players like Ola, Uber and Rapido to provide reliable transportation services. The soft launch includes cars, auto and bikes, with more than 51,000 drivers registered so far on the app. The digital app, 'Bharat Taxi', will be operated by the Sahakar Taxi Cooperative Ltd, a multi-state cooperative society, registered under the MSCS Act 2002 on 6 June, 2025. "Bharat Taxi has been launched in Delhi with more than 51,000 drivers registered on the app," Sahakar Taxi Cooperative Ltd Chairman Jayen Mehta told PTI. *—PTI*

US sanctions slash India's Russian oil imports by one-third

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

India's imports of Russian crude oil fell by nearly one-third after stringent US sanctions targeting major Kremlin-linked exporters came into effect on 21 November. Analysts expect further declines in December, as Indian refiners look to alternative supply sources to avoid sanctions breaches.

India's Russian crude imports averaged 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) in November, accounting for over 35 per cent of its total crude mix, according to real-time analytics firm Kpler. This compares with 1.5–1.6 million bpd in October, making November a five-month high, largely driven by stockpiling ahead of the sanctions deadline.

Before 21 November, imports hovered around 1.9–2.0 million bpd as buyers accelerated cargo movements. After the deadline, volumes dropped sharply, tracking at approximately 1.27 million bpd down 570,000 bpd month-on-month. Kpler estimates December arrivals may fall to around 1.0 million bpd and could dip further toward 800,000 bpd before stabilising.

India, the world's third-largest oil importer, became the biggest buyer of discounted Russian crude after Western sanctions following Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Russian crude rose from less than 1 per cent to nearly 40 per cent of India's import basket, with Russia remaining its top supplier in November.

However, new US sanctions on Rosneft, Lukoil and their majority-owned subsidiaries have disrupted trade, effectively rendering their barrels "sanctioned molecules". Refiners such as Reliance Industries, HPCL, HPCL-Mittal, and Mangalore Refinery have paused purchases. The main exception is Rosneft-backed Nayara Energy. *—PTI*

Rupee closes at all-time low of 89.96

At intraday, it recorded low of 90 against USD

MUMBAI, 2 DEC

The rupee hit the psychological 90-a-dollar level in intraday trade before settling 43 paise down at an all-time low of 89.96 against the US dollar on Tuesday, largely owing to continued short-covering from speculators and sustained importer demand for the American currency.

Forex traders said multiple pressures, like foreign fund outflows from equities and lingering uncertainty over the Indo-US trade deal, are keeping investor sentiment fragile.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 89.70, then lost its ground and fell to a record intraday low of 90.00 against the US dollar, down 47 paise over its previous close.

At the end of trade on Tuesday, the rupee settled at a record low of 89.96 against the greenback, down 43 paise over its previous close.

On Monday, the rupee depreciated by eight paise to close at 89.53 against the US dollar.

"The 90 level is a major psychological barrier -- and a cluster of buy-stop orders likely sits above it. This is precisely why the RBI must remain active below 90; if the pair starts sustaining above this zone, the market could quickly shift into a higher trending phase toward 91.00 or even higher," said Anindya Banerjee, Head Commodity and Currency, Kotak Securities.

At this stage, it is essential for the central bank to prevent speculators from becoming too comfortable with a one-way trend, as that can trigger an unnecessary spike in USD-INR volatility, Banerjee added.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.06 per cent higher at 99.41. *—PTI*

On Monday, the rupee depreciated by eight paise to close at 89.53 against the US dollar *PHOTO: AI*

DGCA probing AI's A320 operations without certification

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Aviation watchdog DGCA is probing the incident of Air India operating an A320 neo plane without having a requisite airworthiness certification on at least eight routes, and the personnel concerned have been de-rostered till completion of the investigation.

On the instructions of the regulator, Air India is also carrying out an internal investigation to identify deficiencies in their system and put corrective measures in place to prevent such failures from occurring in future, a statement said on Tuesday.

The airline informed the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on 26 November about the flying of the A320 aircraft with the expired Airworthiness Review Certificate (ARC) on eight revenue sectors.

ARC is issued annually in respect of an aircraft after a comprehensive review of its maintenance records, physical condition and verification of compliance with all airworthiness standards. It is a validation of an aircraft's main Certificate of Airworthiness (C of A).

Under the norms, Air India has been delegated the powers to issue the ARC for an aircraft. *—PTI*

2,563 STOCKS ADVANCE

Markets decline for 3rd day amid FII selling

MUMBAI, 2 DEC

Stock markets declined on Tuesday, with the benchmark Sensex tumbling nearly 504 points due to selling in blue-chip bank stocks and Reliance Industries, and persistent foreign fund outflows.

Falling for the third straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 503.63 points or 0.59 per cent to settle at 85,138.27. During the day, the benchmark tanked 588.9 points or 0.68 per cent to hit a low of 85,053. The index had scaled a record high level in intra-day trade in the previous session, but closed lower due to profit booking in the second half.

The 50-share NSE Nifty declined by 143.55 points or 0.55 per cent to 26,032.20.

Among Sensex firms, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank, Bharat Electronics and Larsen & Toubro were the biggest laggards.

However, Asian Paints, Maruti, Bharti Airtel and Bajaj Finance were among the gainers.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,171.31 crore on Monday, while Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought stocks worth Rs 2,558.93 crore, according to exchange data.

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.49 per cent and midcap index dipped by 0.14 per cent. BSE Telecommunication, consumer durables, teck and auto were the winners.

A total of 2,563 stocks declined while 1,586 advanced and 167 remained unchanged on the BSE. *—PTI*

RBI may cut repo rate by 25 bps in Dec: Report

KOLKATA, 2 DEC

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) may announce a 25-basis point cut to the repo rate during its upcoming monetary policy meeting in December, according to a report from credit rating agency CareEdge. This potential decision comes on the heels of a significant drop in inflation, now at a decadal low of 0.3 per cent in October—well below the RBI's 4 per cent target threshold.

The current repo rate is 5.5 per cent. The report highlights that stable Brent crude prices, healthy reservoir levels aiding rabi sowing, and muted price pressures from excess capacity in China should mitigate sharp inflation increases.

While GDP growth surged to 8.2 per cent in the second quarter of the 2025-26 fiscal year, CareEdge anticipates a moderation to around 7 per cent in the latter half, as the effects of initial export boosts wane and post-festival consumption tapers. For the fiscal year, a growth forecast of 7.5 per cent has been put forth.

- The report suggests that with CPI inflation predicted to average around 3.7% over next year, the current real policy rate of roughly 1.8% provides room for a rate reduction.

The report suggests that with Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation predicted to average around 3.7 per cent over the next year, the current real policy rate of roughly 1.8 per cent provides room for a rate reduction. CareEdge expects the RBI to revise its FY'26 inflation projections to 2.1 per cent and growth forecasts to 7.5 per cent during the December meeting. *—PTI*

Reliance merges Star Television Productions with Jiostar

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Reliance Industries has announced the completion of two significant corporate developments: the merger of Star Television Productions Ltd (STPL) with Jiostar, and the internal restructuring of its consumer business.

The merger of STPL, a subsidiary that owns the renowned 'STAR' brand, with Jiostar India was confirmed in a regulatory filing on Monday. Jiostar, a joint venture established after the merger of Reliance's media business with Walt Disney's Indian operations in November 2024, is now positioned as the country's leading media and entertainment platform. Valued at USD 8.5 billion, Jiostar reported revenues of Rs 7,232 crore with a profit after tax of Rs 1,322 crore for the September quarter. Following the merger of JioCinema and Disney+ Hotstar in February, Jiostar launched the new streaming service JioHotstar.

In a parallel move, Reliance Retail has successfully completed its internal restructuring process, transferring its consumer business to a new entity called New Reliance Consumer Products Ltd (New RCPL).

This new subsidiary of Reliance Industries will see the group, led by billionaire Mukesh Ambani, retain an 83.56 per cent stake.

The restructuring was initiated to consolidate the FMCG brands business, and following the completion of the scheme on 1 December 2025, the previous entity, Reliance Consumer Products Ltd (RCPL), has been dissolved. *—PTI*

NHAI, Jio to launch safety alerts system

National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) signed a memorandum of understanding with Reliance Jio to introduce a telecom-based safety alert system across the NH network. The automated system will work for all Jio mobile users near the National Highways and provide early warning to NH commuters before they enter a hazardous zone. The system will use existing telecom towers, without additional roadside hardware. *—PTI*

SC rejects RIL's appeal against ₹30 lakh fine

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed Reliance Industries Limited's (RIL) appeal against a Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) upholding the penalty imposed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

A penalty totaling Rs 30 lakh was imposed on RIL, Savithri Parekh and K Sethuraman for failure to promptly provide clarifications to the stock exchange regarding the Jio-Facebook deal, which had been disclosed through media reports.

SC upheld SEBI's stance that the company did not issue timely confirmations or denials in response to widespread media reports in March-April 2020. *—PTI*

Tata Communications buys 51% Commotion stake for ₹227 crore

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Tata Communications on Tuesday announced the acquisition of a 51 per cent stake in Commotion Inc., an AI-native enterprise SaaS platform with operations in the US and India, for a total consideration of Rs 227 crore. The amount comprises the purchase of shares from existing shareholders as well as fresh capital infusion into the company.

According to the company's release, integrating Commotion's capabilities into Tata Communications' digital fabric will accelerate its AI adoption and support its transition into an AI-first organisation. The move aligns with its ongoing efforts to help enterprises shift from AI experimentation to scalable, business-critical transformation.

The acquisition strengthens AI integration across the company's offerings, particularly its Customer Interaction Suite, which includes Tata Communications Kaleyra, enabling more contextual and unified AI-driven experiences for customers and employees. The deal will be executed as a cash-only acquisition on a fully diluted basis through a Stock Purchase Agreement. *—PTI*

Amar Subramanya is Apple's AI new VP

WASHINGTON, 2 DEC

Apple has appointed **Amar Subramanya** as its new Vice President of AI, succeeding long-time executive John Giannandrea, who will remain on as an adviser until his retirement next spring. Tim Cook, Apple's CEO, expressed enthusiasm for the move, stating, "AI has long been central to Apple's strategy, and we are pleased to welcome Amar to Craig's leadership team and to bring his extraordinary AI expertise to Apple."

In a blog post, the company highlighted Subramanya's significant experience: "His deep expertise in both AI and ML research, and in integrating that research into products and features will be important to Apple's ongoing innovation and future Apple Intelligence features."

Subramanya, who graduated in electrical, electronics, and communications engineering from Bangalore University in 2001, initially joined IBM as a software engineer before pursuing a PhD at the University of Washington. He then had an eight-year tenure at Google, ultimately rising to the position of VP of Engineering, where he led projects like the Gemini Assistant.

He briefly joined Microsoft as Corporate Vice President of AI before making the move to Apple. His appointment comes as the company faces criticism for lagging behind competitors like Samsung in generative AI adoption. *—Agencies*

WIPRO COMPLETES $375M ACQUISITION OF HARMAN'S DTS UNIT

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Wipro has successfully finalised its acquisition of HARMAN's Digital Transformation Solutions (DTS) business unit for $375 million, following the necessary regulatory approvals.

The acquisition, initially announced on 21st August 2025, allows Wipro to integrate DTS into its engineering global business line.

This deal will see more than 5,600 DTS employees, including members of senior leadership, transition to Wipro across the Americas, Europe, and Asia.

According to the company, HARMAN's DTS enhances the company's capabilities in product engineering and digital transformation services, particularly in the areas of embodied AI, embedded software, device engineering, and customer experience platforms. *—PTI*

URGES TO PAUSE IMPLEMENTATION

BIF flag concern over SIM-binding for messaging apps

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

- BIF represents major technology firms like Meta, Google, and others, and its latest stance marks another standoff with the telcos' body COAI

Broadband India Forum (BIF) on Tuesday flagged "serious concerns" over the government directive mandating a continuous, active SIM for use of messaging apps, and urged the Centre to pause implementation timelines and hold stakeholder consultations on the SIM-binding issue.

BIF said that, while well-intentioned in its stated goal of curbing cyber-fraud originating from abroad, the directions raise significant questions of jurisdiction, consumer impact, and risk, creating obligations that extend far beyond the mandate of the Telecom Act or the purpose of the Telecom Cyber Security Rules. BIF represents major technology firms like Meta, Google, and others, and its latest stance marks another standoff with the telcos' body COAI, which believes the government's latest directive would bolster national security and safeguard citizens.

COAI on Monday pledged telecom operators' commitment to supporting the seamless implementation of the directive.

BIF termed it "disappointing" that directions of such far-reaching operational impact have been issued with such short implementation timelines, "without any form of public consultation or user-impact assessment".

The government has issued directions that would ensure app-based communication services remain continuously linked to users' SIM cards -- a move that would make it impossible to access these apps without an active SIM associated with a registered mobile number. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Aussie tennis coach Clark hails Khelo India

JAIPUR, 2 DEC

Australian tennis coach Todd Clark, who has worked in India since 2008, praised the Khelo India initiative, saying it gives teenagers purpose at a crucial age. Currently Director of Tennis at KIIT in Odisha, Clark is guiding his trainees at the Khelo India University Games in Jaipur. Clark was part of the Indian contingent at the 2025 Summer World University Games in Germany, where Vaishnavi Adkar won a historic women's singles bronze India's first in women's tennis and only the second medal since Nandan Bal's 1979 silver. He said the programme promotes fitness, builds character and boosts infrastructure. Coach Clark added that India has strong tennis potential but needs better talent identification and counseling.—*PTI*

India bets on Ro-ko for ODI against SA

The duo is being put to test amid growing rift with Coach Gautam Gambhir

RAIPUR, 2 DEC

India will bank on Virat Kohli's imperious form and Rohit Sharma's authoritative presence to secure a series win against a gritty South Africa in the second ODI here on Wednesday, even as chatter over a volatile dressing-room environment continues to swirl.

Kohli's record-extending 52nd ODI hundred and Rohit's brisk 57 shaped India's 17-run victory in the Ranchi opener, where the home attack faced a spirited South African fightback. With the 2027 ODI World Cup two years away, both senior batters are effectively auditioning each match, proving fitness, form and, reportedly, managing growing differences with head coach Gautam Gambhir. The issue, dominating off-field discussions, may prompt BCCI intervention.

Despite the opening win, India have several on-field concerns. The team combination appears unsettled: Ruturaj Gaikwad was pushed from opening to No.4, looking only partially attuned to the role, while stand-in skipper KL Rahul firmly held his position at No.6. Washington Sundar, used flexibly across formats, batted at No.5 but fell during India's slowdown and bowled only three overs for 18 runs.

With the 2027 ODI World Cup two years away, both senior batters are effectively auditioning each match PHOTO: PTI

Harshit Rana impressed early with two new-ball wickets but leaked runs later, an area requiring attention under the ICC's new rule allowing only one ball — rather than two — from overs 34 to 50. Kuldeep Yadav's 4/68, though expensive, proved decisive with his variation.

South Africa will draw confidence from their recovery after slipping to 11/3. Marco Jansen smashed a 70 off 39 balls, Matthew Breetzke hit a composed 72 on debut against India, and a long tail featuring the dangerous Corbin Bosch threatened a heist. With regular skipper Temba Bavuma and Keshav Maharaj rested in the first ODI, the Proteas are likely to strengthen with their return.

Raipur's Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh Stadium remains relatively unfamiliar territory.

The only ODI here, in January 2023, saw India rout New Zealand for 108, while a low-scoring T20I in 2023 also favoured bowlers. —*PTI*

> ODI and Test cricket feel like my game because I enjoy the longer format. I'm really excited to play more ODIs as well. When Rohit bhai and Virat bhai are in the same team, the confidence level is completely different
>
> -Tilak Varma, India batter

> If your performance is poor, you could be fired. Therefore, you need to maintain patience. Communication and man-management skills are crucial here. Only then can you motivate the players to win
>
> -Ravi Shastri on Gautam Gambhir

KOHLI TO PLAY VIJAY HAZARE AFTER TENSE TALK WITH OJHA

A video circulating on social media on Tuesday showed the Indian team waiting at Ranchi airport, where Vi-rat Kohli was seen in an intense discussion with former India spinner Pragyan Ojha, the newest member of the BCCI selection committee. In the short clip, Kohli appeared to do most of the talking while Ojha listened after which it was announced that he is availability to play in the Vijay Hazare Trophy beginning on 24 December

In a separate video, Rohit Sharma was seen sharing a lighter exchange with Ojha and head coach Gautam Gambhir.

The visuals surfaced a day after reports suggested that Gambhir's relationship with senior players Rohit and Kohli has cooled, impacting the ODI dressing-room atmosphere.

According to reports, disagreements over Kohli's future have strained ties. Earlier in the day, they were rumours that Kohli, has declined to play believ-ing he does not require excessive preparation, putting the BCCI in a difficult position as it pushes top players to prioritise domestic cricket.

INDIA VS SOUTH AFRICA ODI

INDIA vs SOUTH AFRICA Match starts at 1.30 pm IST

Maxwell pulls out of auction, hints at ending IPL career

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

Cameron Green, Liam Livingstone, Ravi Bishnoi, Venkatesh Iyer, and Matheesha Pathirana are among the 45 players who have entered the 2026 Indian Premier League (IPL) auction with the highest base price of Rs 2 crore, according to ESPNcricinfo.

Australia all-rounder Glenn Maxwell, 37, confirmed he won't be entering the auction, hinting he has already played his last game in the lucrative T20 league. Maxwell is the latest high-profile player after Andre Russell and Faf du Plessis to pull out of the mini-auction. A total of 1,355 players registered for the auction, with the final list shared with franchises after registrations closed on 30 November. Each franchise can have a maximum squad of 25, with 77 slots available this year, including 31 for overseas players. The IPL is expected to refine this list after receiving wishlists from all ten teams, with franchises allowed to submit their shortlisted players until 5 December. The auction is scheduled for 16 December in Abu Dhabi.

While specialists in key roles among Indian players could attract significant bids, the spotlight is primarily on Cameron Green, who missed the 2025 mega-auction due to a back injury. Teams like Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) and Chennai Super Kings (CSK), both with healthy budgets, are expected to show strong interest. KKR, notably after the retirement of Andre Russell, may aggressively pursue Green due to his versatility.

Several players, including Matheesha Pathirana and Venkatesh Iyer, have opted for the top price bracket of Rs 2 crore. —*ANI*

> It's never easy to release a player of Faf du Plessis' caliber. Letting him go was a really tough decision because he has been a stellar performer in the IPL for many years
>
> -Hemang Badani, Delhi Capitals head coach

REVANTH KICKS THE BALL

Telangana CM Revanth Reddy gears up to play against the football legend Lionel Messi on 13 December in Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Jacks replaces Bashir for 2nd Ashes Test

BRISBANE, 2 DEC

- With paceman Mark Wood sidelined due to injury, England opted for Jacks as a spin option rather than back-up seamers Josh Tongue and Matthew Potts

England has named Will Jacks in place of Shoaib Bashir for the second Ashes Test against Australia. The all-rounder will feature in the day-night match set to commence on Thursday in Brisbane. Jacks, who made two Test appearances in Pakistan three years ago, has primarily played in limited-overs formats since then.

With paceman Mark Wood sidelined due to injury, England opted for Jacks as a spin option rather than back-up seamers Josh Tongue and Matthew Potts. Bashir, the preferred spinner with 68 wickets from 19 matches, was the spare man in England's 12-man squad for the first Test, which they lost in just two days. Australia's opener Usman Khawaja will miss the Brisbane Test due to a back injury. England team: Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope, Joe Root, Harry Brook, Ben Stokes (captain), Jamie Smith, Will Jacks, Gus Atkinson, Brydon Carse, Jofra Archer. —*PTI*

HC bins Bajrang, Vinesh appeal against WFI polls

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

The Delhi High Court has dismissed petitions filed by prominent Indian wrestlers including Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik, Vinesh Phogat, and Satyawart Kadian, who were challenging the Wrestling Federation of India's (WFI) elections held in December 2023. The ruling followed the wrestlers' repeated absences from court hearings.

Justice Mini Pushkarna, presiding over the case, noted on 27th November that the petitioners were absent during the current and previous hearings. "The petitioners do not seem to be interested in prosecuting the present matters," she stated in her order.

The wrestlers had asked the High Court to intervene, claiming that the WFI elections were marred by a lack of fair and transparent practices, alleging procedural lapses and irregularities during the electoral process. Their challenge gained prominence given their roles in the 2023 protests advocating for reform and greater accountability within the federation.

With continual non-appearance from the wrestlers, the court ultimately dismissed the petitions in default and for non-prosecution, signifying the end of their legal efforts to contest the WFI elections. The election saw Sanjay Singh elected as president, defeating Anita Sheoran, a candidate supported by the Olympians, signalling a significant moment within the wrestling community in India. —*PTI*

Barring Agha, all Pak players to play T20

KARACHI, 2 DEC

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has cleared 12 centrally contracted players to compete in three franchise leagues during December and January ahead of the global tournament in India and Sri Lanka.

The only exception is T20 captain Salman Ali Agha, who remains unsigned by any franchise despite leading the side since December 2024, renewing debate over his limited appeal in the shortest format.

Pakistani players will feature in the Bangladesh Premier League, the Emirates International League T20 (ILT20) and Australia's Big Bash League (BBL), all scheduled in the same December–January window. No Pakistani cricketers were picked for South Africa's T20 League, largely controlled by IPL franchises and Indian companies.

Babar Azam, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Mohammad Rizwan will make their BBL debuts alongside Shadab Khan and Haris Rauf. Eleven players, including Abrar Ahmed, Usman Khan, Saim Ayub, Mohammad Nawaz and Faheem Ashraf, have been signed for the BPL, while Fakhar Zaman, Naseem Shah and Usman Tariq will join the Desert Vipers in the ILT20.

The PCB may recall players early for a three-match T20 series in SL, followed by three home games against Australia from 30 January. —*PTI*

Murray shrugs off disappointment of Djokovic stint

LONDON, 2 DEC

Andy Murray has expressed his disappointment with the results achieved during his brief coaching stint with former rival Novak Djokovic, which lasted just six months. Murray joined Djokovic's team in November 2024, shortly after retiring from professional tennis at the Paris Olympics.

The partnership encompassed the Australian Open and five other tournaments, but it was cut short due to disappointing performances. "I look back on it and I'm glad that I did it," Murray remarked on The Tennis Podcast. "It's an amazing experience that I've had. It didn't last long but I put everything into it. I was disappointed. Probably didn't get the results I would have liked for him."

Djokovic struggled after injuring his left hamstring during the Australian Open. He faced losses in Qatar and Indian Wells and ultimately lost to Czech teenager Jakub Mensik in the Miami Open final. Murray had initially aimed to coach Djokovic through to the French Open, but the partnership ended in May after defeats in Monte Carlo and Madrid.

"It was going well initially, and it was unfortunate what happened in Australia with the injury... I learned a lot about what coaching is," said Murray. —*PTI*

Indian Pickleball League starts with thrilling opening

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

The Indian Pickleball League (IPBL), the nation's only official league sanctioned by the Indian Pickleball Association under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, launched its inaugural season with a high-voltage opening day. Lucknow Leopards, Hyderabad Royals, and Chennai Super Warriors all produced commanding victories.

Lucknow Leopards defeated Bengaluru Blasters 4-1. India's top-ranked Aditya Ruhela beat Vietnamese international Phuc Huynh 15-10. Shelby Bates won the women's singles 15-5 and teamed with Pearl Amalsadiwala to take the doubles 15-13. A 21-17 Grand Rally clinched the tie, with Ryler Deheart and Bates named Players of the Tie.

Hyderabad Royals beat Capital Warriors Gurgaon 4-2. Ben Newell and Divyanshu Kataria won the men's events, while Megan Fudge edged a 15-14 singles win and, with Snehal Patil, took the women's doubles 15-10. Newell and Fudge were Best Male and Female Players of the Tie.

Chennai Super Warriors overcame Mumbai Smashers 5-1, rallying after an loss. Roos van Reek and Aaliya secured women's victories, while Mitchell Hargreaves and Harsh Mehta won men's doubles. Van Reek and Mehta were Players of the Tie.

Delhi CM Gupta opened the league, pledging to introduce pickleball in schools and support sports. Upcoming matches: Hyderabad vs Chennai, Lucknow vs Mumbai, Bengaluru vs Gurgaon. —*ANI*

DISAPPEARING DURING FOREIGN TOURS

Asian Para athletes to face background checks

NEW DELHI, 2 DEC

The Sports Ministry has approved a 161-member Indian contingent for the Asian Youth Para Games in Dubai from 7–14 December, while directing thorough background checks of all personnel following past incidents of officials and support staff "disappearing" during foreign tours.

The delegation includes 99 athletes — 61 men and 38 women — along with 62 coaches, support staff and contingent officials. The ministry has also asked the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) to submit a detailed performance report, with action photographs and visual highlights, within 30 days of the team's return.

In a letter to the PCI, the ministry said stringent vetting was essential after concerns were raised by leading para-athletes about officials treating overseas events as "paid holidays". No athlete has reportedly absconded, but there have been complaints of missing support staff.

- The ministry has also asked the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) to submit a detailed report that comprises performance, with action photographs and visual highlights, within 30 days of the return of the team

One incident involved a wheelchair-bound coach at the Asian Para Table Tennis Championships in Beijing who allegedly took his son as an escort and disappeared for the duration of the event.

A para-athlete welcomed the ministry's intervention, noting that officials had been occupying positions meant for escorts, leaving athletes without essential support.

PCI Secretary General Jayawant Gundu Hammanavar, appointed chef de mission, is the only official cleared to travel at no cost to the government.

The ministry reiterated that elected office-bearers travelling as team officials will not be funded.

The Asian Youth Para Games will host over 1,500 athletes from 45 nations across 13 sports. India's squad includes 62 para-athletes. —*PTI*

Nice fans attack players after 6th straight defeat

PARIS, 2 DEC

Ligue 1 club Nice has condemned "unacceptable" incidents following an attack on players and staff by furious fans after a sixth consecutive loss. Following a disappointing 3-1 defeat to Lorient, supporters confronted the team upon their return to training, demanding greater commitment. Reports indicate that some fans boarded the team bus, with players Jérémie Boga and Terem Moffi reportedly suffering physical assaults. Sporting director Florian Maurice was also targeted.

"The club understands the frustration caused by the series of poor results and performances that fall short of its values," Nice stated on Monday. "However, the incidents that occurred during this gathering are unacceptable. OGC Nice offers them its full support and condemns these actions in the strongest possible terms."

Nice currently sits 10th in Ligue 1, 14 points behind leaders Lens, with a troubling record of seven losses and 26 goals conceded. Coach Franck Haise acknowledged the dire situation, asserting, "We're fighting for survival, that's the reality. A team exists only when everyone has that desire."

Maurice highlighted a lack of cohesion: "Every time there's a slight setback we can't recover."

Nice's next match is against Angers at home to be held on Sunday. —*PTI*